



E. Dunster A.M.

LONDON Printed for Dan: Brown & John Walthoe .



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THE *H. G. i*
CONSIDERATIONS
OF
L
DREXELIUS
UPON
ETERNITY.

Made English from the Latin.

By *S. Dunster*, A. M.

L O N D O N :

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By S. Dyer

LONDON

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TO THE
HONOUR'D
Mrs. P R O B Y.

M A D A M,

THE following Considerations do every where abound with so many moving and passionate strains of Piety and Devotion; the Subject they Treat of is so Important, and the Interest, which we all have in it, so very considerable, That I do not at all doubt, but they will meet with a kind Acceptance. For who is there

A 2 among

The Epistle Dedicatory.

among us who does not wish for an *Eternity* of Happiness? Who does not wish to partake of the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, and to dwell with his God, and his Saviour for ever?

The design of the Author is to guide and direct us in our way to Heaven; to this end he recommends many excellent Precepts to our serious Practice, all which are improv'd, beautified, and adorned, with several bright and shining Characters, collected from the *Fathers*, and other *Ancient Writers*.

We

The Epistle Dedicatory.

We are every day convinc'd how much Mankind is govern'd by Example; the best Precept in the World is not near so touching; and the Reason is plain, because by the one, we are drawn to admire the Excellency of the other, and to Practice what we so admire.

I am not therefore without Hopes, that the great Examples which are here introduc'd, will be of good Use and Service to those who shall duly consider them: But as none are so powerful as living Exam-
A 3 ples,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ples, I promise my self that my prefixing your Name to this Translation, will be an Encouragement to all who have, or shall have the Honour to know *Y o u*, to contemplate *Eternity*; that at the gloomy Hour of Death, when their Souls shall be separated from their Bodies, they may not fail of being admitted into those happy blisful Regions, which a Vertue like *Y o u r s* is sure of attaining.

God in his Providence has been pleas'd to bless *Y o u* with an affluence of all the good Things of this Life;

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Life; and 'tis Y O U R peculiar felicity to make them truly subservient to the next: Y O U R Piety and Devotion, Goodness and Charity, and all the charming Graces and Vertues which appear so amiable in Y O U R Life and Conversation, are an undeniable Testimony of the Truth of what I say.

Permit me then, MADAM, to close this Address, with my sincere and earnest Wishes, that, the good God, who thus signally has blest Y O U, may continue his Grace and Favour to Y O U; that he may lengthen and

A 4 pre-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

preserve a Life so beneficial
to YOUR Friends and Ac-
quaintance; and that having
finish'd YOUR Course with
Joy, YOU may find a sure,
tho' late Reception, into
those Heavenly land & Eter-
nal Mansions, which he has
prepar'd for them that Love
him.

I am with all Devotion,

M A D A M,

Your most Humble and
most Obedient Servant,

S. Dunster

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Page 19, l. 11, read *Volaterranus*. p. 22. l. 7. r. *Fables*,
l. 11. r. *Tyion terra*, p. 28. l. 23. r. Instruments,
p. 29. l. 35. r. *Vesuvius*. p. 32. l. 6. r. *An*. p. 33. l. 35. r.
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34. r. let me advise you to, p. 133. l. 9. r. and to, to
Morrow, p. 175. l. 3. r. burn.

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Page 101. l. 11. read Volaterranus. p. 22. l. 7. r. Tabler.
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34. r. let me advise you so. p. 133. l. 9. r. and so to
Morrow. p. 175. l. 3. r. burn.

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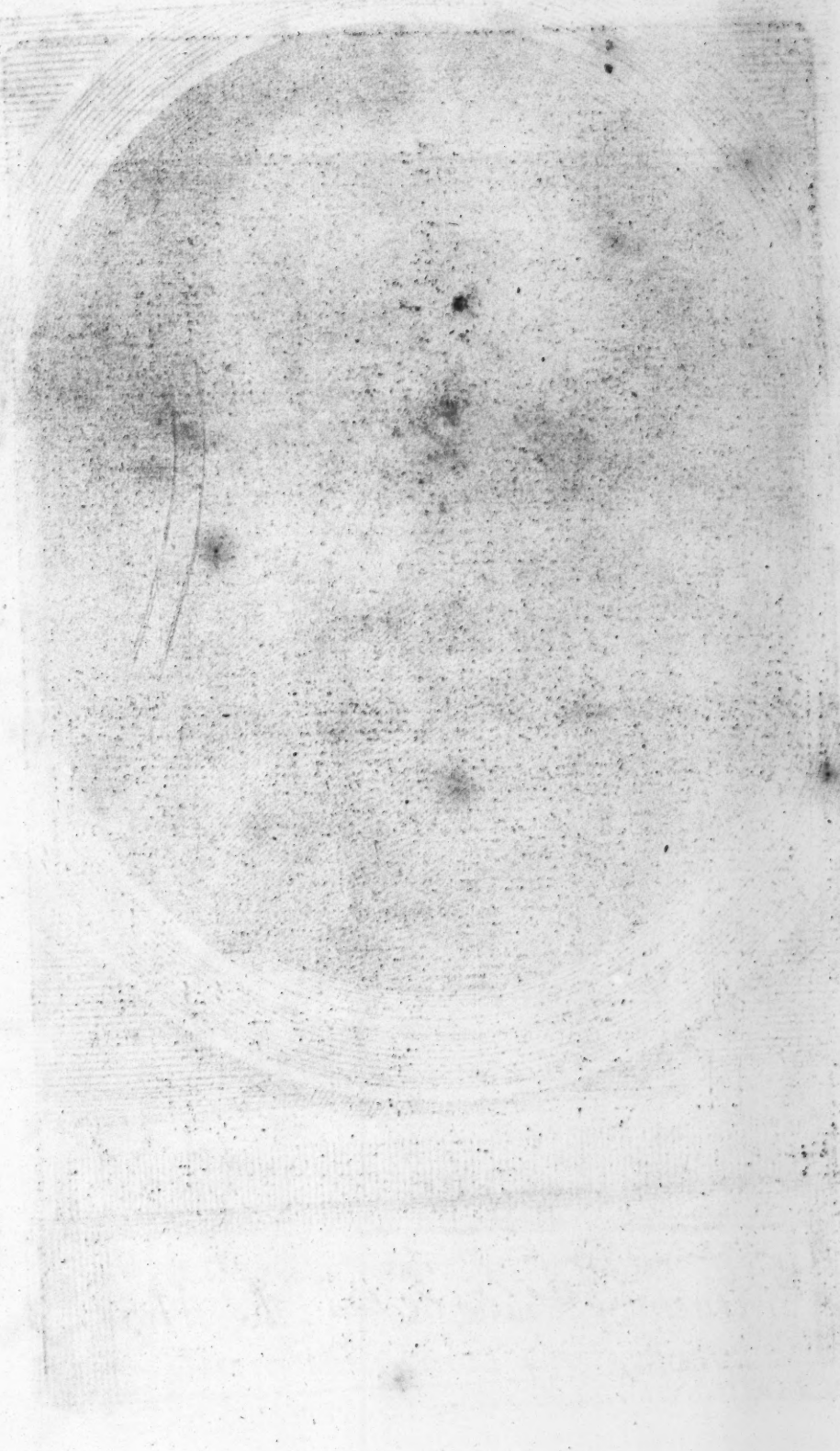
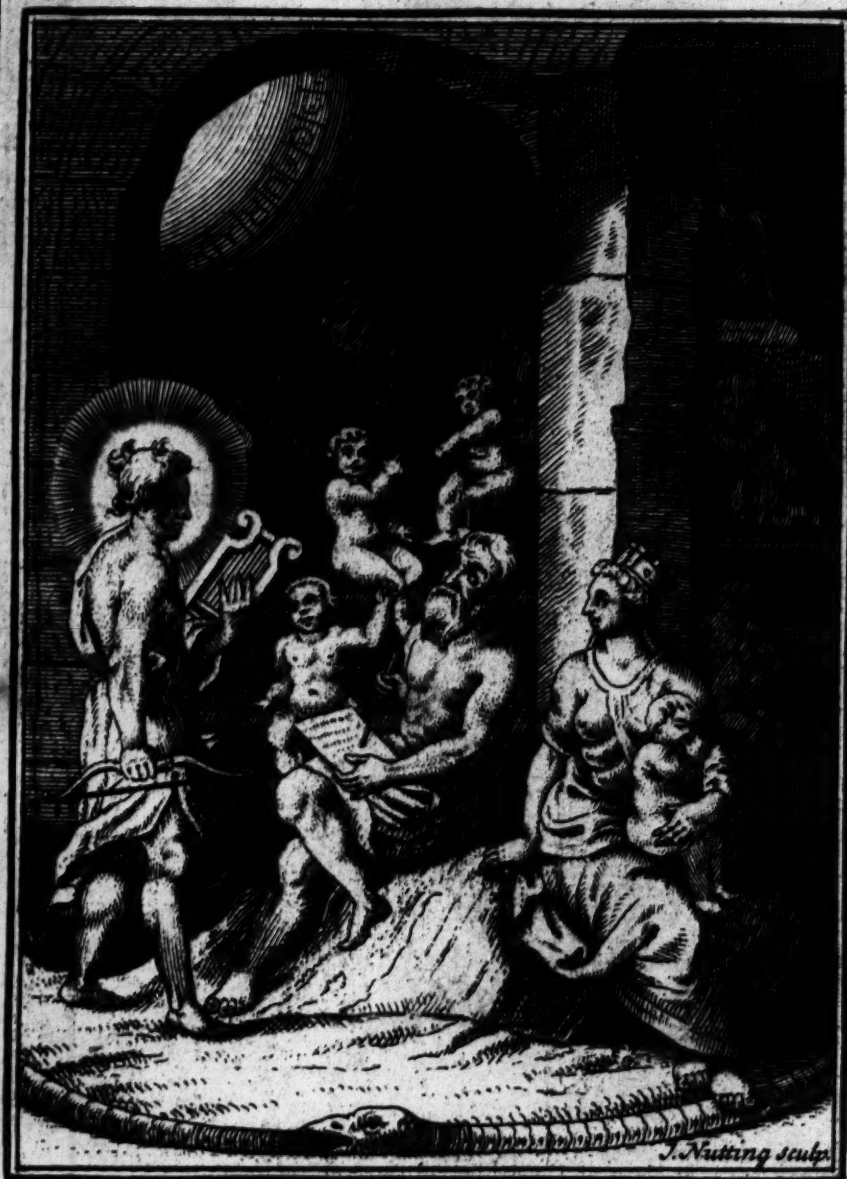


Fig. 1.
Ecclesiasticus Ch. 1. v. 5. —



*The word of God most High, is the
fountain of Wisdom; and her ways
are everlasting Commandments. —*

DREXELIUS's
CONSIDERATIONS
UPON
ETERNITY.

CONSIDERATION I.

What *Eternity* is.

WHAT is GOD ? said *Hiero King* *Cicero de*
of *Sicily*, to *Simonides* : The *Nat. Deor.*
Philosopher, being surpris'd at *Lib. 1.*
so unexpected a Question, de-
fired one day to consider upon it ; that being
past, he desired two more, then three ; 'till in
the end, he ingenuously confess'd, that the more
he consider'd the Question propos'd, the less
able he was to return an Answer. *Eternity* is
the subject of our present Discourse, in treat-
ing of which, we are first to consider what *E-*
ternity is : *Boetius* tells us, that it is a com- *Lib. 5 de*
pleat *Consol.*

The first Consideration

pleat, and entire possession of a Life without end, that will always be, and be to come.

Thus it is that he defines *Eternity*; but let no Man think amiss of this Performance, if I plainly tell him, that it cannot be defin'd; the more we consider it, the more we may; why should we endeavour to determine that, whose Nature is boundless, and cannot be determin'd? If it be demanded, since we are not able to comprehend it, that some lively Figures be given of *Eternity*: My Answer is, that this may be better done by declaring to you what it is not, than what it is. In this manner *Plato*, in his *Timæus*, form'd his Thoughts of God Almighty: *What God is*, says that Philosopher, *I know not, what he is not, that I know*. Agreeable to which are the Sentiments of *S. Augustin*, the good and pious Bishop of *Hippo*. In his Sixty Fourth Sermon, on the Words of our Blessed Saviour, he describes the Felicity of the Saints above, by removing from it, all manner of Evil: *We can more easily find*, says that Holy Father, *in what their Happiness does not consist, than in what it does*. In *Heaven* there is no such thing as *Misery*; No *Grief* nor *Sorrow*, no *Pains* nor *Evils*, e're come there; *Disease* and *Death*, have no admittance to the *Mansions of the Blessed*. Thus ought we to express ourselves, when we speak of *Eternity*; What-ever we behold in this Life, what-ever is convey'd unto us by our Senses, is not *Eternal*: *The things which are seen, are Temporal*; but the things which are not seen are *Eternal*.

2 Cor. 4.
v. 18.

We ought therefore thus to commune with ourselves; This my Joy, and Pleasure, and Delight; this Treasure, and Honour, and Mag-

Magnificent Palace ; even my Life is flitting and transitory, they are none of 'em *Eternal*. Look round the World ; Can you fix your Eye on any one thing that will last for ever ? 'Tis usual, indeed, with the Multitude to say ; This stately Building will never decay ; this Monument bids defiance to Time : The impatient Man also complains in his Distress, that his Pains are everlasting.

Such *Eternities* as these are of a short duration, and may easily be comprehended ; but the *Eternity* which I am speaking of, is above all expression ; it is not in the Power of Words to reach it ; say what you will of it, you will still say less than you ought to say.

St. *Augustin* in his Commentary on *Psalms* the 61st has these Words : You say of *Eternity* what you will : You say what you will, because all that you can say, is less than you would say ; 'tis therefore necessary that you should say something, that you may think on something which cannot be expressed.

The Soul (says *Trismegistus*, the *Ægyptian* Philosopher) is, as it were, the *Horizon* of *In Asclepio* Time and *Eternity* ; as it is Immortal, it partakes of *Eternity*, but as it is infused by God into the Body, it belongs to *Time*.

Before we proceed, it will be requisite, for Order's sake, to take a view of the Sentiments of the Ancients, I mean the *Egyptians*, *Grecians*, *Romans*, and others ; for certain it is, that they acknowledg'd *Eternity*, and made several different Representations of it.

CHAP. I.

The Opinions of the Ancients concerning ETERNITY, and how it was drawn, and Figur'd by them.

THEY represented *Eternity* by a Ring, or a Circle, without a Beginning, and without an End : And forasmuch as these two Properties do only belong to the Eternal GOD, whose duration is best express'd by *Eternity* ; the *Ægyptians* by a Circle signified God. The *Persians* believ'd, that the greatest Honour they could pay to God, was, having first ascended to some lofty Tower, to give him the Title of the *Circle of the Heavens*.

Pierius tells us, that it was a constant Practice among the *Turks* to cry out in a Morning, from the Battlements of their Towers, *God always was, and always will be* ; and then to pay their Adoration to *Mahomet* ; the *Saracens* also call'd God a *Circle*.

Mercurius Trismegistus, that celebrated Philosopher whom I just now mention'd (who, if we will believe *Seleucus* and *Menacius*, has written more Books than any Man beside) said, that God was an intellectual Sphere, whose Centre was every-where, and Circumference no-where ; because the Majesty and Immensity of
of

of God cannot be limited or circumscrib'd. For the same reason the Ancients made their Temples round: So *Numa Pompilius* is said to have dedicated a Temple to *Vesta* of an orbicular Figure: So *Augustus Caesar* is said to have consecrated in *Agrippa's* Name a round Temple to the Gods, and to have nam'd it *Pantheon*. For this reason *Pythagoras* commanded his Scholars to turn themselves about when they worship'd God; this, as he thought, was a very likely means of implanting in their Minds some just Ideas of God's Eternity; the same practice was also establish'd by *Numa*, according to *Brissonius*. Manifest therefore it is, that the Ancients consider'd God as a Circle, but as a Circle, whose Centre was every-where, and Circumference no-where; for God is the Beginning and End of all things. Well therefore might Holy *Job* cry out, *Behold, God is great, and we know him Chap. 36. not, neither can the Number of his Tears be searched 26.* out. Again, they figur'd Eternity by a Sphere and a Globe: The Empress *Faustina* had her Money Stamp'd in the following manner; She sat upon a Globe, with one hand extended, in the other she held a Sceptre, with this Inscription, ETERNITY. From hence it was that a great many of the Ancients were induc'd to believe the World Eternal, because it was round, to whom St. *Basil* made this excellent Reply; I grant (says he) that the World is round, but the beginning of a Circle is the Centre.

Further, the Ancients represented Eternity by a Seat, by which they denoted Eternal Rest. The *Nasamones*, a People of *Libya* in *Africa* do for the most part not only Die sitting, but are buried so; as if they had reach'd the Confines

The first Consideration

of Eternity, and obtain'd a release from all their labours : Even Kings and Emperors are at this day found fitting in subterraneous Vaults with a silent but mournful Majesty.

'Twas a common practice among the *Romans* to support the Statues of their dead Emperors with such-like Seats, by which they intimated, that they now enjoy'd Eternal Rest. There are many in the World, who oftentimes reason thus with themselves ; Hitherto I have made myself a Slave to care and trouble ; Why do I not take some little respite ? Why do I not give myself a discharge from these Vexations ? Let others do as I have done ; I have labour'd long enough, 'tis now high time to indulge my Ease, and enjoy the Fruit of all my Labours. With such thoughts as these they fix their Seats, and promise to themselves many happy days ; but alas ! their happiness is of a short duration : They fix their Seats, and promise to themselves many prosperous hours : but alas they are mistaken both in the time and place !

Kempis Lib. How truly and devoutly does that excellent
2. Chap. 12. Treatise of the Imitation of *Christ* advise us ?
Dispose and order all things according to thy Will,
and according to the lust of thine Eyes ; yet still
thou shalt meet with nothing but afflictions, which
willingly or unwillingly thou shalt undergo, and
thus shalt thou always find the Cross. The whole
Life of Christ was a Cross and Martyrdom, it
was a continu'd Scene of Sufferings, and do you
hope for Joy and Rest ? Remember to fix your
Seat in Heaven, do not think of placing it here
on Earth, alas, here is nothing but Misery and
Trouble ! Is it possible for it to stand in quiet ?
 Suppose

Suppose it exempted from common calamities, Death at last will most certainly destroy it. There is no rest but what is Eternal ; if there be any, it consists in this, in resigning up ourselves, and all that concerns us, to the Will of God, in putting our Trust and Confidence in him, and in esteeming all other things as Vanity, and Nothing.

Thus are we Instructed in *Ecclesiasticus* ; Trust in the Lord, and abide in thy labour ; take a way this peace and quiet of Mind, all other things are nothing but trouble, a mere tempestuous raging Sea, and the very presence of Hell itself : But I return to the Ancients. Ch. 11. v. 21

To proceed, They represented Eternity by the Sun and Moon ; tho' the Sun sets, and seems, as it were, to die in the Evening, yet in the Morning he revives again ; the Moon increases after every Wane, and Shines with the same bright Lustre, and Glory as she did before. *Catullus* in his Poems hath very happily express'd himself to this Effect :

*The glorious Sun in th' Ev'ning seems to die,
And in the Morn again adorns the Sky ;
But we, when once we are depriv'd of Light,
Are wrapt in Mists of everlasting Night.*

This eternal Night is the portion of the damn'd, who take no rest ; they are not permitted to close their Eyes, because in this Life they slept away their Time when they should have watch'd : Now they are forc'd to watch for ever, for the little Sleep which they had in this World, which they now wish had been

The first Consideration

for ever. But it is otherwise with the Saints above, Light and Gladness spring up unto the Righteous ; their Labours and Watchings, which were not of any long continuance, are now recompenc'd in Heaven with Rest eternal, with Pleasures everlasting.

The *Basilisk* is another Emblem of Eternity ; There are none of God's Creatures so venomous as the *Basilisk* : He kills the Herbs with his poysonous Breath ; he frightens the Beasts with his terrible Hissing : Wherever he appears, the tuneful Birds forget their Songs, and mourn in silence. He has over and above, this peculiar Priviledge, that it is not in the power of Man to kill him.

'Tis reported by *Ælian* that in the Deserts of *Africa* a great many Serpents flock'd together, as to a Feast, with design to devour a certain Beast who fell down thro' weariness ; and that at the terrible Hissing of the *Basilisk*, they flew away like Light'ning to their Dens. Eternity, whether of Joy or Torment, is still the same, apply it as you please ; It does not admit of any Diminutions, nor can it be avoided : No wonder then, if, to every rational sensible Man, it appears so dreadful ; innumerable are the foldings of this terrible *Basilisk* : His *Orbs* and *Windings* cannot be measured, he is all over Horror and Astonishment.

To apply this to ourselves : It often happens, when a Man looks into his Breast, and lays his Conscience open to his view, that he finds therein many Broods of Serpents ; imagine to your self the surprize he is in, at so melancholy a sight : How came this Poyson, says he, into my Breast ? Whence all these Serpents
and

and deadly Sins > This Army of Lizards ? This train of wanton lustful thoughts ? I am terribly astonish'd at so numerous a Progeny.

Cease to Wonder, the Cause is this : Every marshy fenny place which lies long neglected, is apt to breed Serpents ; the humidity of the soil, and the negligence of those who ought to manure it, do both contribute to their generation. Nor is it otherwise with the Soul of Man ; if we spend all our Time in pampering the Body, in gratifying our sensual inclinations, and pleasing ourselves with all that's sweet, certain it is that that Immortal Principle within us, which animates the Body, dwells in a moist and humid place : Add to this, our strange neglect of Spiritual Things ; so our Bodies be healthy and vigorous, it matters not what becomes of our Souls ; we very seldom make confession of our Sins, and when we do, we do it by halves : When we lead such careless and profligate lives, is it to be wonder'd at, if our Breasts abound with Broods of Serpents ? Hear me ! O Good Christian, hear me ; let the *Basilisk* enter into thy Breast ; think upon *Eternity*, and then these Vipers will soon be gone. You complain that your Heart is all o'er filthiness, that it abounds with Serpents innumerable : What is this but a plain indication, that *Eternity* is not in all thy Thoughts ; amend thy ways, and begin at length to reflect with thy self, that that which pleases, is but for a moment ; but that which torments, endures for ever.

To conclude ; The Ancients represented *Eternity* after this manner : There was a large vast frightful Den, about which a Serpent wound

The first Consideration

wound himself, and in the twining bit his Tail. On one side of the Den stood a fair sweet Youth, of a very lovely, blooming Aspect, who held in his Left-hand a Bow and two Arrows, in his Right a Harp : in the Entrance of the Den sat an Old Man, who, having fix'd his Eyes upon a Table-Book, writ down some remarks on the Motions of the Heavens, which the Youth, who stood by, dictated to him ; on the Left sat an Old Gray Matron, with an erect Countenance : At the Mouth were four Steps, each higher than the other ; the first was Iron, the second Brass, the third Silver, the fourth Gold. On these were several little Children playing, who had no apprehensions of the Danger they were in.

This is the Emblem, and this is the Explanation : The Den signifies *Eternity*, which cannot be comprehended ; the Serpent which twines himself about it, is Time ; the Youth is GOD, in whose Hand is *Heaven* and *Earth*, and *Hell* ; *Earth* and *Hell* feel the Arrows of the *Almighty*, but in *Heaven* there is nothing but Joy and Harmony. The Old Man is Fate, or rather the eternal Decrees of God ; the Matron is Nature ; the Steps are the several Ages of the World ; the Children which are playing upon them, signify all created things ; but principally Man who neglects his Salvation, who tho' he stands at the very entrance of *Eternity*, minds nothing but his Pleasure.

Unhappy Mortals ! We have play'd too long on the brink of Destruction : Ever while we live, we stand as it were, on the Confines of *Eternity* ; if Death but touch us never so lightly, we are immediately lost, and swallowed up
in

in the vast deep of *Eternity*; there is no need of a long engagement, Death if he pleases can dispatch us in a moment, and throw us down from the Steps which we play upon, into the Ocean of *Eternity*. Consider with yourselves, O you that play on these slippery Steps! Who think on every thing rather than *Eternity*; you know not how soon you may fall into the Pit; to morrow, this day, nay, even this very moment, you may be translated from *Time* to *Eternity*.

C H A P. II.

The secret sense of Scripture is explain'd, in relation to Eternity.

HAVING given an account in the preceding Chapter, of the several *Types* and *Representations* of *Eternity* among the Ancients; it will not be improper to take a view of the sacred Writings.

When *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon* commanded the three *Hebrews* to be cast into the midst of a burning fiery Furnace, for refusing to worship the Golden Image which he had set up; the Flame ascended Forty Nine Cubits above the Furnace. A very wonderful thing indeed, but there's a Mystery in it. Who could pretend so accurately to measure a rapid

Daniel
Chap. 3.

The first Consideration

rapid Flame, as to tell its height exactly to a Cubit ? Cou'd any one go up to the top of it, or apply a Measure to it ? Cou'd he say that its height was just Forty Nine Cubits, and not Fifty ? We do not use to number things in this manner : We generally say, Twenty, Thirty, Forty, Fifty, tho' the things which we number are somewhat more or less : But here the Fiftieth Cubit is wanting ; there is certainly some secret meaning in it, 'tis indeed a Mystery. The number Fifty was made use of by the *Jews* to denote their *Jubilee* ; but the Flames of *Hell*, tho' they infinitely exceed all the Torments of this Life ; tho' they extend both to Soul and Body, yet they shall never be able to attain a Year of *Jubilee*. *Hell* is a hopeless, desperate State ; the miserable inhabitants of those gloomy Regions must never expect a day of Grace ; their Torments are endless and irreversibile : Now is the time to obtain a free pardon, not every Hundred, or Fifty Years, but every Day, every Hour and Moment of our Life : That Pardon may now be had in a Moment, which all Eternity cannot purchase hereafter ; in one little short Day more Debts may be now forgiven us than in Millions of Ages in the Life that is to come.

Let me add to this another place of Scripture which needs some explication. When the People of God pass'd over *Jordan*, the Waters which came down towards the Sea of the Plain, which is now call'd the dead Sea, fail'd and were cut off ; We read also in *Ecclesiasticus*, There is that buyeth much for a little. *Galfrid* joins these

Joshua 3.
v. 16.

Eccles. 20.
v. 12.

these two Texts together and discourses thus upon them : If thou hast deserv'd eternal bitterness, and canst easily avoid it, by any thing that is temporal ; little hast thou given, but thy Purchase is considerable. It must be confess'd that the Sea in which thou sail'st is the dead Sea ; but thou hast deserv'd the Salt unnavigable Sea ; what thankful returns ought'st thou to pay to God for so happy a Change ? 'tis thro' this dead Sea that thou must go to the Land of the Living ; I wish you a safe and happy voyage. This Author compares the calamities of this Life to the dead Sea ; To the other he compares the Torments of *Hell* ; no man can possibly escape both these, he must either plunge into one or the other. O man ! Says *St. Chrysostom*, dost thou design to go to Heaven, and dost thou ask me whether there be any difficulties in the way ? Whatever we do, this dead Sea must be past over ; 'tis in our power, if we please, to reach the calm and peaceful Port of eternal Happiness. *The Word of God most high is the Fountain of Wisdom, Eccles. 1. and her ways are everlasting Commandments. v. 5.* Thro' this dead Sea we must steer our course, by the way of God's Commandments ; the Scripture is very express in this particular, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. Mat. 19. v. 17.* Ask *Cornelius a Lapide* that celebrated Divine, what *Eternity* is ; he will say, It is a Circle which runs back into itself, whose Centre is every-where, and Circumference no-where. What is *Eternity* ? 'Tis an Orb, whose several Parts resemble each other, in which there is neither beginning nor end. What is *Eternity* ? 'Tis a Wheel which turns, and will continue to

to turn for ever and ever. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a revolving Year, which having finished its course, begins again at the point where it ended. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a perpetual Fountain, to which the Waters, after many various and intricate foldings return again, that they may flow for ever. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis an eternal Spring which sends forth sweet and bitter Waters, Waters of Blessing, and Waters of Cursing. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a Labyrinth of innumerable Windings and Turnings, which lead those about, that enter into it, till they know not where they are. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a bottomless Gulf: 'Tis a spiral Line, whose Circles are endless, and cannot be number'd. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a Serpent, which holds his Tail in his Mouth, in the form of a Circle, which at the end begins again, and never ceases to begin. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a duration that is always present, 'tis one eternal Day, which cannot be divided into past or future. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis an Age of Ages, says *Dionysius*, which is always the same, and will never have an end. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis a Beginning without a Beginning, without a Middle, and without an End. What is *Eternity*? 'Tis an eternal, infinite Beginning, never ending, always beginning; In which the Holy Saints and Angels always begin a happy Life, and always enjoy new Scenes of Pleasure; in which the Damned always die; who, after they have endur'd a thousand struglings, and suffer'd Death a thousand times, shall begin again to struggle with Death, and to die again. While God is God, the happy shall be happy; so long

long shall they reign and triumph in Glory. While God is God, the Damned shall suffer the torments of Hell; so long shall they cry out in the anguish of their Spirits, *We are tormented in this Flame, and we shall be tormented from everlasting to everlasting.*

C H A P. III.

*Why ETERNITY is called
a Mansion.*

JOHN the *Patriarch* of *Alexandria*, a Man of singular Goodness and Piety, who made it the constant employment of his Life to visit the Sick, took with him for his Companion *Troilus* a Bishop, who lov'd nothing but his Money. Brother *Troilus*, said the *Patriarch*, whispering him in his Ear, let us assist the Friends of *Christ*; let us do what we can to relieve their necessities. Upon this *Troilus*, that he might the better conceal his Covetousness, a Disease with which he was much afflicted, order'd his Servant to distribute to the Poor, all that Money which he lately gave him for other uses. Some time after, he fell ill of a Fever, which was occasion'd by his Covetousness; the *Patriarch* no sooner heard of his illness, but he guess'd at the cause of it; he immediately went and made him

him a visit, carrying as much Money along with him, as *Troilus* had lately given to the Poor; after some discourse, he address'd him thus: I lately beg'd your Charity to the Sick, but I was not then in earnest, my Servant at that time had no Money about him; Here, take your *Philippi*, and with them my Acknowledgments for the Favour you have done me. As soon as *Troilus* saw the Money, he began to revive; the heat of his Fever abated, and all things tended to a perfect Recovery: *Troilus* finding himself much better, rose to dinner, and eat plentifully with his Friends: Dinner being over, he compos'd himself to rest, and enjoy'd a sweet, and comfortable Sleep; during his Repose, he saw in a Dream a magnificent Palace, over the Gate was this Inscription, *The Eternal Mansion, and Resting Place of Bishop Troilus*. He was wonderfully pleas'd and delighted with his Dream; but not long after he dream'd again, and this second Dream was grievous to him, for One appeared before him with a Troop of Workmen, and commanded them to take down that Inscription, and to put another in the room of it which was this; *The Eternal Mansion and Resting Place of John, Patriarch of Alexandria, which he purchased for Thirty Pounds*. 'Tis impossible to express the commotions which he felt at this strange Vision, but the use which he made of it was much to his advantage; and the change which it wrought in him was very considerable; for, whereas before he was of a Merciless, Covetous disposition, he became a Liberal Generous Man, particularly to those who stood in need of his Charity; so much was he affected only with the Dream of an *Eternal Mansion*. O

O Blessed Mansions, and therefore Blessed because Eternal ! With what Passion does our *Saviour Christ* desire that we should disdain these our Earthly Perishing Tabernacles, and long after and hasten to these Eternal Mansions : *In my Fathers House are many Mansions ;* John 14. 23 Entrance is here deny'd to no Man ; every one may Enter here that will. The place is exceeding large and spacious ; time excludes no Man ; the Mansions are Eternal.

O Eternal and Merciful God, O Eternal Truth, O true Love, O amiable Eternity ! do thou so cure the blindness of our Hearts, that the present sensible transitory afflictions, which we experience in this Life, may be a means of inspiring in us, a very lively and awful sense of the dreadful Punishments in the Life that is to come. Do thou O God direct and teach us, so to possess things perishing and Temporal, that we finally lose not the things Eternal. Teach us we beseech thee so to lament the Sins we have committed, that we may escape Eternal Vengeance ; so to behave our selves in our Pilgrimage that we be not excluded from our Native Country, so to demean and comport our selves in our Earthly Tabernacle, that we may not fail of being receiv'd into the Mansions which are Eternal.

THE SECOND CONSIDERATION UPON ETERNITY.

CONSIDERATION II.

In what Things Nature represents Eternity.

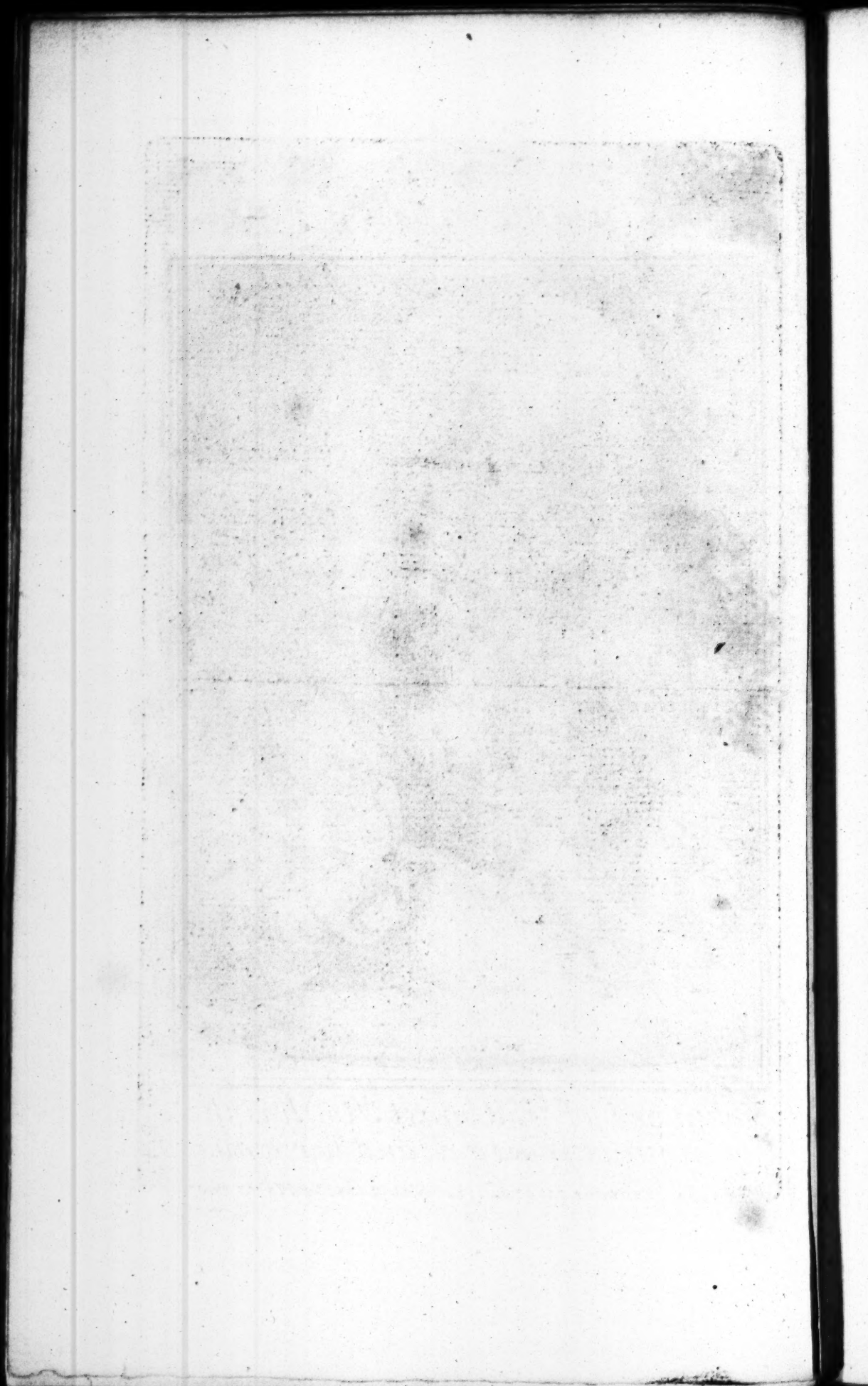
THE Idolaters themselves confess'd an Eternity, and describ'd it by certain particular Signs. 'Tis true, their notions of it were not altogether so clear as ours, but God has sufficiently manifested it to them, Rom. I. 20. so that *they were without Excuse*. Since it is then our peculiar happiness to enjoy such lively Figures of it, such as none before usever had, we ought the more earnestly to treasure it in our Minds, in Meditating upon it both Day and Night. Rom. 2. v. 1. *Therefore thou art inexcusable O Man, whosoever thou art,* if under so many and such powerful representations thou dost not fix thy thoughts upon Eternity. Where e're you go, *Rings and Circles, Spheres and Globes, the Sun and Moon* are in thy sight; can you possibly look upon any of these things and not be mindful of Eternity? Nature her self like a tender Parent

Fig. 2.

Habakkuk Ch. 3. v. 6.



*The perpetual Hills did bow,
His ways are Everlasting.—*



rent has purposely expos'd them to publick View, that whenever we hear or see of them they might dispose and prepare and invite us to think upon Eternity.

Solinus tells us; That there is a Stone in *Arcadia*, call'd *Asbestos*, which being once set on Fire, burns continually. We read also in *St. Augustin*, that the Lamps which the Ancients made use of in their Temples and Sepulchres, were made of this Stone. Add to this, that *Pliny*, *Valaterranus Dioscorides* and Others give a wonderful Relation of a certain kind of Flax, which is so far from being consum'd by the Fire, that it is wash'd and cleans'd by it. Accordingly we Read, that in former times the Dead Bodies of their Kings, before they were laid on their Funeral Piles were wrapt about with a Linnen-Cloth made of this Flax; this they did to keep their Ashes entire, and to distinguish them from others.

De Civitate Dei;
Lib. 21.
Chap. 5.

This Flax has several different names, some call it *Linum Asbestinum*; others *Carystum*; others *Indum*, and *Linum vitum*.

There goes a Report that *Nero* had a Table-Cloth made of this Flax, which he valu'd above Gold and Precious Stones. Behold and see how Nature, always kind and good, leads thee, as it were, like an Indulgent Mistress, and directs thee to a thing over which the Fire has not the least Power. Thus shall all the Dam'd Burn, but the Fire shall never be Extinguish'd; they shall always Burn, but never be Consum'd; they shall seek for Death in the Flames, but shall never find him. How justly therefore does *Amandus* cry out, O woe Eternal, which will never have an end! O end without end! O deathless Death! O death more grievous than all kinds of Death, always to die, yet never to be dead. After the same manner the

In *Hero's*
Gio Sapien-
tia.

Isaiah 66.
v. 24.
Rev. 9. 6.

Divine *Isaiah* expresses himself, *Their fire shall never be quenched*; and the Angel in the *Revelation*, *They shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them*

'Tis reported of the *Salamander*, that for a little time, it can, not only endure the Fire, but even Live in it; the truth of this is clearly attested by several great and considerable Authorities; *Aristotle*, *Pliny*, *Galen*, *Alian*, *Dioscorides*, nay, even *St. Augustin* himself believ'd it. This Creature is generated of Showers, and consequently of a very cold Nature, the Sun or Drought immediately kills it; according to *Pliny* it lies in the fire like Ice, of its Skin are made Lights for perpetual Lamps, which are always Burning. The good God who created the Salamander out of Earth and Clay, from the very same Matter gave being unto Man, but he endued him with a nobler Nature; *He made him, 'tis true, a little lower than the Angels*; but after this Life, God in his goodness hath assign'd to Man the very same Kingdom as he did unto the Angels. But *Man being in Honour had no understanding, but was compar'd to the Beast that perish*. He by his wickedness has made himself such a *Salamander*, who must always live or always die in flames Eternal. In those Infernal flaming Prisons, all things are Eternal, but particularly Six; of which I shall Treat in the following Chapter.

C H A P. I.

What things are Eternal in Hell.

I. **T**HE condemn'd Person himself is Eternal, it is not in his power to choose whether or no he will be Immortal. In Hell
no

no Man can destroy himself or kill another; *they shall seek Death and shall not find it.* Even the very desire to die, forasmuch as that desire cannot be satisfied, shall aggravate their Torments. Rcv. 9. 6.

2. The Prison of the Damn'd is also Eternal, it cannot perish or fall to decay, neither can it be undermin'd or broke open; 'tis fenced with Banks and Mountains inaccessible; its Chains and Bars are so vastly strong, that none can force them. Shou'd any of the Inhabitants of those Gloomy Regions, before the day of Judgement come again into the World, by Gods Permission, he wou'd bring his punishment from Hell along with him; he wou'd be an Eternal Torment to himself.

3. As the Prison is Eternal, so is the Fire, which can never be extinguished; *Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting fire,* are the express Words of Christ himself. Do you attend to the word Everlasting? This fire is kindled by the Anger of the Lord, and it will burn for ever. *The Breath of the Lord,* saith the Prophet *Isaiah,* *shall kindle it like a stream of Brimstone, it shall not be quench'd by Night or Day, the smoke thereof shall ascend up on high for ever and ever.* Matt. 25.
v. 41.
Isai 30. v.
33.
Isai 66.
24.
Rev. 14. 11.
St. Aug. de
Civ. Lib. 12.
Ch. 23. 4 St. Augustin observes, that *Eternal Life*, and *Eternal Punishment* are Relatives, that they have both one and the same duration; and therefore, says the Father, nothing can be more absur'd, than for Men to say, that there will be an end of *Eternal Punishment*, but that *Life Eternal* will endure for ever. Who can hear this and not speedily set about his Conversion, when we are not safe in the delay of one Moment.

The Second Consideration

Add to this. the *Worm* and *Conscience*, which is always in Despair, being deeply tortur'd with the melancholly remembrance of an ill-spent Life. *Their Worm dieth not*, saith the Royal Prophet. The Ancient Poet borrow'd this from the Scriptures, and inserted it in their Tables. Thus *Tityus* is describ'd in *Virgil* with a Vulture gnawing and tearing his Liver, which every Night grws again, and affords a new and fresh supply to the rapacious Bird.

*Nec non & Tidyon tenera omniparentis alumnus
Cernere erat: per tota novem cui jugera corpus
Porrigitur; rostroq; immanis Vultur obunco
Immortale jecur tundens, secundaq; penis
Viscera, rimaturq; epulis, habitatq; sub alto
Pectore; nec fibris requies datur ulla renatis.*

Virgi: Aeneid: Lib. 6. l. 595.

*A Rav'nous Vulture in his open Side
Her crooked Beak and cruel Talons try'd:
Still for the growing Livor digg'd his Breast,
The growing Liver still supply'd the Feast;
Still are his Entrails fruitful to their Pains,
Th' Immortal Hunger lasts, th' Immortal Food
Mr. Dryden. (remains.*

What is this *Vulture* but the *Worm* in the Prophet? And what is the *Liver* but a guilty *Conscience* rack'd and tormented with remorse and anguish Everlasting.

The final Sentence of our Saviour Christ, when he sits in Judgment, is likewise Eternal; A Decree irrevocable, immutable, Eternal. When once this Sentence is gone out of his Mouth, it stands good for ever; there is no Appeal

Appeal to any other Judge; in vain you hope to make a Reply; no truce or respite will be admitted. Tho' the Blood of Christ which was shed on Mount *Golgotha*, was in all respects an intire compleat and perfect satisfaction, yet the Damn'd receive no benefit from it. *If the Yoke of the Lord be a Yoke of Repentance*, says St. Bernard, you presently conclude, that of it self it cannot be sweet; but do you not know, that nothing in nature can possibly be sweeter, if compar'd with that Fire, which the Scriptures tells us, is everlasting. *Go ye Cursed into everlasting Fire.* MArk. 25. V. 41.

The pain of Loss, or, as the Schoolmen term it, the deprivation of the beatifick Vision, like the other Plagues and Tortures of the Damn'd, shall never have an end, because in Hell there is no place for satisfaction. Their torments shall continue many Millions of Years without one sweet or refreshing Moment. 'Tis true, their torments are not always the same, they languish under variety of Pains; but alas! this variety is an addition to their Misery. Our Blessed Saviour has more than once foretold it by St. Matthew. *The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* They shall gnash their Teeth with cold, and the fire shall force them to lament and weep. How then can any Man be so strangely forgetful of God and himself? How can he so debase his Nature? How can he be so senseless and stupid, senseless and stupid like the Rocks and Stones, as not to feel some commotions in his Breast when he thinks on the endless torments of Hell, torments so astonishing, so dreadful and amazing, that they cannot be expressed. How can he forbear saying

thus unto himself? I am now in the way to Eternity, and perhaps am nearer than I think I am; I am already on the confines of it, come one small thrust and I fall for ever. If it seem grievous and intolerable to a Man under a fit of the Gout or Stone, or any other Distemper, to lye sighing and groaning on a Downy Bed but one Night without Sleeping; if the Night is tedious and irksome to him; if he thinks the Morning long in coming, or that the Sun has stop'd his natural Course; and yet, as I before observ'd, he lies all this while on a Bed of Down, not without hopes that the day will be milder and more gentle to him, and that the Physician will give him some relief.

If the Gout or Stone is in one short Night thus severely painful and grievous to us, consider we with our selves how shall we endure to lie in the flames Night and Day for Thousands of Years; I repeat it again, for Thousands of Years. Consider we with our selves, how intolerable will it be there to Watch and Hunger, and Thirst, and Burn, to have no part of us free from Pain, and to despair of any Consolation. Consider we with our selves how grievous will it be to endure this endless Scene of Misery, without the hopes of a Release. There, saith *Thomas a Kempis* in his admirable Treatise of the Imitation of *Jesus Christ*, *One single Hour is more insupportable than the most severe and bitter Repentance, were it to last a Hundred Years. O Lord rebuke me not in thine Anger, neither chasten me in thy sore Displeasure. Oh remember not the sins and offences of my Youth; but according to thy mercy think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy Goodness, Spare me O God, and have mercy upon me, or I am lost for ever.*

CHAP.

Ch. 24.

Psa. 6. 1.

Psal 25.
. 6.

C H A P. II.

Why Hell is Eternal.

TO this Head belongs a Question which deserves to be resolved. How is it, that the Good and Merciful God, whose Mercy is over all his Works, shou'd, notwithstanding punish one Mortal Sin, which perhaps was only conceiv'd in Thought, or if committed, was done in a moment, to all Eternity. This looks as if no Punishment was great enough for it; and tho' Millions and Millions of Ages be past, yet it shall never be said, that the guilty Sinner hath made satisfaction to God's violated Majesty, for the Crime which he committed. Divines indeed tell us, that our sensual Thoughts, tho' we never design'd to exert them into Action, do then become Sins, when we suffer them to dwell too long upon our Minds, and take a more than ordinary complacency in them. Hath God then for one Sin, and that in Thought only, determin'd Man to everlasting Punishment? What equality is there in this Proceeding? What Proportion is there between one short Sin, by which no Man was hurt or prejudic'd in the least, and an Eternity of Misery? How often does happy David cry out; *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious, and his Mercy endureth for ever.* Psalm 106, 1. 107, 1. 108, 1. 137. If God be so severe, why does he repeat it twenty seven times? Why is this frequent Repetition? To this St. *Augustin, Gregory, Thomas Aquinas* and others

others answer. That the Offence of every Sin is in its own Nature Infinite, because it is an injury against the infinite Majesty of God. Again, He that dies guilty of any Sin without Repenting of it, does in effect Sin Eternally; Death, in taking away his Life, took not away his inclination to Sin; he ceas'd not to Sin, when he ceas'd to Live; but were he permitted to live for ever, he wou'd Sin for ever. It is further to be consider'd, that it is not in the Power of the Damn'd in Hell, supposing they were able to discharge their Debts, to make any Satisfaction. For being Enemies to God, and consequently not in favour with him, neither they nor their Payment wou'd be accepted; but it is impossible for them to make any Payments, since they do nothing but suffer Punishment, which is sore against their Inclinations. To explain this Argument, take this easie and familiar Example; A Man borrows of his Neighbour a hundred Crowns, and for the Security of the Interest, Mortgages to him his House for ever; in Twenty Years or thereabouts, the Creditor will have receiv'd the Money he lent; but what of that, is the Debt therefore paid? No certainly, the principal Sum remains behind, which is not at all lessen'd or diminish'd, but continues as intire as it was at first, notwithstanding the yearly payment of the Interest. This is exactly the case of the Damn'd, tho' it were possible for 'em to pay never so much, yet still they will always be in Debt. They are still Debtors to God, and will always be so. *The strong shall be as Two, and the maker of it as a spark, they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them, Isaiah*
 1. 31.

Suetq.

Suetonius reports of *Tiberius Caesar*, that be-
 ing one day petition'd by a condemn'd Person, Suet. Lib. 3. cap. 6.
 (as he was taking a review of his Prisoners) for
 a speedy Execution, he made this reply, *Nondum*
tecum in gratiam redij. No, Sir, You and I are
 not Friends yet. Our Saviour Christ is no *Tiberius*,
 he is a just and impartial Judge, and has no-
 thing of the Tyrant in Him, and yet shou'd
 one of the Damn'd Petition him, after a Thou-
 sand Years Punishment in Hell, for a speedy
 Death, he wou'd return him the same Answer,
Nondum tecum in gratiam redij, No, Sir, You and
 I are not Friends yet. Let him wait another
 Thousand Years, nay, let him stay a Million,
 and then let him prefer the same Petition, and
 he shall receive the very same Answer. Let
 him stay another Million, and then ask again,
 Christ will still reply, *Nondum tecum in gratiam*
redij, You and I are not friends yet, in vain you
 hope for a Reconciliation; There was a time,
 when I wou'd gladly have been a Friend, nay
 a Father to you, but you wou'd not be my Son.
 I offer'd you my Grace a Thousand and again
 a Thousand times, but still it was rejected.
 This I knew full well, and I held my peace,
 and expected the happy time of thy Conversion
 Forty, Fifty, Threescore Years; but there
 followed no serious and steady Repentance.
Thou hast set at naught all my Counsels and would'st
none of my reproof. *Thou hast hated Instruction*
and cast my words behind thee; Prov. 1. 25. Psal.
 50. 17. Now thou may'st enjoy the Fruit of
 thy Ways, and be satiated with thine own De-
 vices; *I will laugh at thy Destruction for ever,* Prov. 1. 26.
 nor shall my Justice after infinite Ages, ever
 return thee any other Answer, but *Nondum te-*
cum

cum in gratiam redierim; You and I are not Friends yet. O God! O Sin! O thou destroyer of Mankind! which throwest Men head-long into a Hell of endless Torments, into the bottomless Pit of Eternity! but Righteous art thou, O God, and true is thy judgment, Psal. 119. 137. It is very meet and just that he, who by Repentance wou'd not accept of offer'd Mercy, shou'd suffer the vengeance of Eternal Justice.

C H A P. III.

Other Motives to the Consideration of Eternity drawn from Nature.

BUT I return to the School of Nature, which in many Instances directs us, as it were, to consider Eternity.

Felix Faber
Book 2. of the
Affairs of
Sweden.

Among the Rocks and Mountains of *Sweden*, there are found, says *Faber* several Hot Baths, the murmuring of whose Waters has a very strange and extraordinary Effect upon those that come thither to be cur'd of their Diseases. If at their entrance into any of these Baths, they imagine they hear a Consort of Musick, compos'd of several different Instrument; their Ears in a little time are so stunn'd with the continual Noise thereof, that the very Musick which at first seem'd so pleasing and delightful, their Imagination working upon it, becomes at last extreamly uneasy and painful to them. But if they imagine they hear a Drum or any other loud sounding Instrument, the noise is so excessive-

excessively troublesome, that it almost Distracts them. How does this lead us to the Consideration of Eternity? The yellings and roarings, and dismal Lamentations which are heard at the entrance into Hell under those infernal Mountains shall never cease; they shall continually affect the Ears, and perplex and confound the Imagination; even Custom it self, which, by degrees, makes the greatest Evils seem light and easie, shall not soften or mitigate the Pain which proceeds from these horrible Wailings. But on the contrary, the Blessed Inhabitants shall Sing for ever, *Holy, Holy, Holy*; And this Divine Song shall be so far from creating in them the least weariness imaginable, that the oftner they Sing it, the greater will be their Joy and Satisfaction.

Our Saviour in his Discourse with the Woman of *Samaria*, makes frequent mention of Eternity; *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of Water, springing up unto everlasting Life.* I wish that with the Woman of *Samaria*, we did all of us thirst after these Waters, and as earnestly pray for them; *O Lord give me this water that I thirst not.* Give me, O my Saviour, but one drop of this Water, do Thou make me to thirst after Life Everlasting.

But there's another Instance by which Nature reveals Eternity to us. *Suetonius, Dion and Pliny the Younger*, relate at large, that in the Year of Christ 81, on the first of *November* about seven in the Morning, the Mountain *Vesuvius* vomited up Fire in a very dreadful and horrible manner, and that this was preceded by

by an uncommon drought and frightful Earthquake. About the same time roarings were heard in the Bowels of the Earth like Thunder; The Sea Rag'd; The Heavens rattled with a fearful Noise; The Mountains trembled as if they were falling. After these Symptoms vast Burning-Stones were all thrown into the Air, then Rivers of Liquid Flames broke forth mix'd with black Smoak, which infected the Sky to such a degree, that the Sun himself withdrew his Light, and appear'd with a sad discolour'd Face, Pale and Dusky, as if all Nature, as some at that time imagin'd, was to suffer in this Agony, and to be reduc'd to the first *Chaos*, or to perish in a general Conflagration. 'Tis impossible to express what a prodigious quantity of fiery Ashes was spread o're the Surface of the Earth and Sea, which did considerable damage both to Men and Cattle, Birds and Fishes perish'd in abundance; *Herculanium* and *Pompeios*, two Famous Cities were overwhelm'd with a shower of Ashes as the People were sitting in the Theatre. These and other flaming Mountains, and Volcanos, which are always burning without being consum'd or exhausted in the least, are so many Examples given us by God, to put us in Mind of the everlasting Fire of Hell, where the Bodies of the guilty are always burning, and yet not destroy'd. Read

Tertul Apo.
Ch. 48. Minutius in
Ora. Pacianus de Pœn
& Confes.

Tertullian upon this sad Subject, let *Minutius* and *Pacian* be consulted, and learn, O Man! How Nature kindly goes before us, and leads us by the Hand to the Contemplation of Eternity.

To conclude; This time of ours is an Emblem of Eternity; Nature desires that by the little measure of Time we should learn Eternity, and form to our selves some Ideas of it from so significant a Sign. There is this difference, says St. *Augustin*, between things Temporal and Eternal; we passionately long for the things of this World, but when we have them, we value them not; they never afford us that lasting Satisfaction which we hop'd for from them. There is nothing that can fill the Desires of Man but the pure unmingled Joys of Eternity, which always satisfe and never cloy. Our Desires and Longings after an Eternity of Happiness are seldom in this Life so strong and vigorous as they ought to be, but when we come to possess it, our Passion will then exceed our Desires; there we shall love it, and have it in Admiration, and yet always think, that we can never love and admire it enough. Our Charity will then be heighten'd and improv'd, even beyond what we cou'd either believe or hope for. Who can Contemplate this Scene of Happiness, and not disdain the transitory Pleasures of this short Life, which are only for a Season? Who can contemplate this Scene of Happiness, and not be transported with the pleasing Hopes of inheriting a Kingdom Eter-
In Sent. Sent. 270.
nal, incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved for us in the Heavens.
1 Pet. 1. 4.

THE

THE THIRD CONSIDERATION UPON ETERNITY.

CONSIDERATION III.

*An Account of those things on which the Old
Romans plac'd their Eternity.*

Epist. 2. to
Tacitus.

PLINY the Younger, thought those Men Happy, who either perform'd things worthy to be Recorded, or writ things worthy to be read; but that they were most Happy who excell'd in both. The *Romans* also were of Opinion, that there were three ways by which they might transmit a glorious Name to future Ages. In the first place, they writ many Excellent Things; this must be acknowledg'd, but all that they writ was not Chast and Pure: They recorded their own dishonest Failings, their Lusts and Passions, and infamous *Amours*. This was no Honourable way to Eternity. How many Books have di'd before their Authors and been utterly forgotten? *Plato* compares them to the Gardens of *Adonis*, which vanish'd away as soon as they sprung up, and appear'd

Fig. 3. Daniel Ch. 5. v. 27.



*Thou art weighd in y^e balances,
and art found wanting.—*

5

pear'd no more. They pleas'd not long which quickly pleas'd. But suppose we the Books of the *Ancient Romans* to out-live time; what will the Eternity of their Books avail them? Can they make their Authors to live forever?

Again, The *Romans* not only writ, but did many excellent Things; Things worthy to be related by the Pens of the most Learned and Eloquent Men. The great Works which they did are truly Wonderful, and their variety is no less to be admir'd. They endeavour'd several ways to make themselves Eternal, but were not able to effect it. We do not deny, but that they did many gallant Actions both at Home and Abroad, by their Arms and by their Counsels. Arts and Sciences were improv'd among them to the greatest Perfection; How Magnificent were they in their Shews and Donations? Their Stately Buildings, Sepulchres and Vaults; Mausoleums and Statues exceed all Belief: You may form to your self some Ideas of their Greatness from these few Particulars which I shall run over very briefly.

Augustus, in his own Name and at his own Expence, entertain'd the *Romans* with Shews and Games four and Twenty times; and three and Twenty at the charge of the Publick; every one of which amounted to two Millions and five hundred thousand Crowns. The lowest and meanest Shew that ever he exhibited came to no less than one Million two hundred and fifty thousand Crowns.

Nero gilded the whole Theatre with Gold; the Dressing Room and Furniture belonging to the Stage was all o'er Gold. He scatter'd wooden Dice among the People, on which were

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inscrib'd

inscrib'd Houses, Fields, Farms, Mannours, Servants, Slaves, and sometimes Sums of Gold and Jewels to a considerable Value. Whosoever was so Happy as to find any of these Lots, immediately receiv'd the Particulars mention'd in the Inscription.

The same *Nero*, for a Donative, gave away at one time to a common Soldier, two hundred and fifty thousand Crowns; His Mother *Agrippina*, being desirous to restrain and moderate his Extravagancy, secretly order'd the like sum of Money to be laid upon a Table in the presence of her Son. *Nero* took the hint, and perceiving that this was done with design to reprove him, he forthwith commanded that the Soldier should receive as much more, saying at the same time, that he cou'd not have thought that the Sum which he gave was so inconsiderable. *Nesciebam Me tam parum dedisse.*

The same *Nero* entertain'd *Tiridates* King of *Armenia*, who was then at *Rome*, for Nine Months together; during which time he expended every Day twenty thousand Crowns: The whole Charge amounted to five Millions and forty Thousand; and notwithstanding this extraordinary Expence, when he departed, the Emperor gave him two Millions and a half to defray the Charges of his Journey.

It wou'd be almost an endless work to mention their Stately and Magnificent Buildings.

The Emperor *Caligula* built a Bridge over an Arm of the Sea, from *Baia* to *Puteoli*, three Miles in length.

There were four hundred and twenty four Temples in *Rome*, most of which were extreamly Magnificent.

Dometian

Domitian expended seven Millions in gilding the Capitol.

Eighty seven thousand Spectators cou'd sit very conveniently on the Stairs of the Amphitheatre, which were all of Stone; the Circumference above held about twelve Thousand, in all ninety nine Thousand.

Besides several other Stately Buildings, there were twelve Publick Baths built by the Emperors, where every one had the liberty of Bathing *gratis*.

In the Hot Baths of *Antoninus* were sixteen hundred Seats of polish'd Stone, and the like number of Men cou'd bath themselves at the same time with great Convenience.

In the Bath of *Etruscus* according to *Pliny*, the Canals, by which the Water was convey'd, the Floor, nay even the very Edges of it were all of Silver; But I hasten to other things.

In *Rome*, there were almost as many Statues as Men, some were of Gold, some of Silver, besides many others, which were made of Brass, Marble and Ivory.

Domitian had a Statue of Gold in the Capitol of an hundred Pound Weight. *Commodus* and *Claudius* had also their Gold-Statues, each of which weigh'd a thousand Pounds: *Claudius* had another of Silver in the *Rostris*. This occasion'd the creation of a certain Officer call'd *Comes Romanus*, who went always attended with a considerable number of Soldiers, whose Duty it was, to look after the Statues.

The *Appian* way reach'd from *Rome* to *Capua*, which is five Days Journey for a Running Footman. It was likewise so broad, that two Coaches might meet and not incommode each

other in the least. It was moreover made so firm and solid, that it seem'd to be one continu'd Stone. There were several other Highways like this.

Authors of Credit tell us many things of the *Roman Aqueducts* which are almost incredible. The Emperor *Claudius* expended upon one six Millions of Gold and a half; he maintain'd no less than six hundred Men to look after the Waters. These were prodigious things indeed, but they that built them were highly to be blam'd for their vast Profuseness; and yet their *Cloaca* or common Sewers were more Magnificent than their *Aqueducts*. There were many of these in *Rome*, some of which were so very large, and of such a stupendious and incredible length, that they may be reckon'd among the Wonders of the World. I need not, I believe, proceed any further; what I have already mention'd is sufficient; this I am sure of, that what I have said, will not in the least seem incredible to those who are conversant in History, or have heard of the mighty Wealth and Power of the Ancient *Romans*; if any one doubts of the Truth of these Relations, give me leave to refer him to *Suetonius*, *Dion Cassius*, *Pliny*, *Livy*, and others, who will give him Satisfaction.

The things which I have mention'd, are in themselves so truly laudable, that they deserve our highest Praises; but the *Romans* are not less to be commended for their wise and prudent Government of their Common-Wealth; In most of their Wars they came off Conquerors; They excell'd all others in Arts and Sciences, and were so eminent for their Vertue,
that

that *Cineas Pyrrhu's* Ambassador, a very wise and eloquent Man, after he had, in vain, solicited the Senate to conclude a Peace which was dishonourable to the *Romans*, told the King his Master, upon his return into *Epirus*, that the City seem'd to him to be a Temple, and all the Senators Kings.

In all these things, as I observ'd before, the *Romans* were much to be Commended; but notwithstanding their great Wisdom and Prudence, they were certainly very grossly mistaken in placing their Eternity in those things which were not Eternal. If the *Romans* had chosen *St. Augustin* for their Guide in the way to Eternity, he wou'd have shewn them a surer and more certain Way. *We do not*, says he, *account those Emperors Happy, who have Reign'd many Years; or have often, as Conquerors triumph'd over their Enemies, or have treasur'd up to themselves Riches in abundance; All these things happen frequently to those who have no Right and Title to the Kingdom, which is Eternal.* Who then, according to *St. Augustin* are Happy? Give ear O ye Emperors, and Kings, and Princes! In the Opinion of *St. Augustin*, there is no way to obtain Eternal Happiness, but by the Observation of these following Rules.

Lib. 5. De.
Civi Dei.
Ch. 24.

1. Justice.

By governing according to the Rules of Justice, and detesting all the wicked Artifices which are opposite to it.

2. Modesty.

2. *Modesty.*

By not being elated by the vain Applauses and flattering Titles which are given you by your Subjects, but by remembering that you are also Men.

3. *The Fear and Love of God.*

By propagating as much as in you lies, the true Worship of God; by submitting your selves to his Divine Majesty, and by serving him in Fear and Love.

4. *The Desire of Heaven.*

By earnestly desiring the Kingdom, which is Eternal, where are no Rivals, where none shall be Jealous of the Power of another.

5. *A readiness to Pardon.*

By being easie and ready to Forgive, slow to Punish; a Sword must never be drawn but when the Good of your Country requires it at your Hands.

6. *Mercy and Liberality.*

By tempering the Rigour and Severity of the Laws with Mercy, and by being Kind and Liberal to others.

7. *Continency.*

7. *Continency.*

By putting just Bounds to your Luxurious Appetites, by curbing and restraining them all you can, and by endeavouring, the greater your Power is, to be so much the more Temperate.

1. *Government of the Passions.*

By choosing rather to have your Passions in subjection than to Rule over Nations.

9. *Humility and Prayer.*

By doing all these things, not out of Ostentation and vain Glory, but in and for the hopes of Eternal Felicity, and by never neglecting to offer unto God, the most noble Sacrifice of Prayer and Humility.

All these Rules has St. *Augustin* fix'd upon the Gates of the World, as a Mirrour for Princes; But O ye *Romans*, how strangely have these Excellent Rules been neglected; instead of worshipping the One True God, to how many stupid Senseless Deities do you pay Adoration? You seem to make it a matter of Religion to embrace all Religions; what an unaccountable thing is this, that you, who have subdu'd the greatest part of the Universe, shou'd make your selves Slaves to the errors and superstitions of those Nations, whom you have Conquer'd?

The Third Consideration.

But let these things pass; Cou'd any thing be more grossly Ridiculous than their affecting to leave their Eternity behind them in Books and Parchment, in Stone and Marble, in Amphitheatres and Pyramids, Tombs and Mausoleums. What is now become of their Eternity? The very Stones in which they inscrib'd it, are moulder'd into Dust and perish'd. The same Calamity which formerly beset *Jerusalem* has now happened to *Rome*. As our Saviour went out of the Temple, one of his Disciples said unto him, Master, See what manner of Stones, and what Buildings are here. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great Buildings? there shall not be left one Stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. In this lower World nothing is Eternal: Where is now Old *Rome*? Shou'd any one propose this Question to me, my Answer is, Here it was; but what are become of those that built it? They are all dead and gone; even their very Ashes are unknown to us. In a few Years we our selves shall follow 'em and tread the Paths of our silent Ancestors; yet a few Years and we shall be as a Shadow, return into Dust and be dissolv'd into Nothing. O the poor frail unstable Condition of Mortal Men! The greatest Monarchs who rul'd the World, are o'er-rul'd by Fate; the strongest Men are taken away in the bloom of Life, Death makes no difference between them and others. What is become of all those things, or rather, whither are they gone? They are vanish'd away. What is become of their immense Treasures? They are flown away. Where now are those Stately and Magnificent Buildings which reached up to the Heavens? They

They are not to be seen. Such is the Condition of all earthly Things; tho' they appear to us to be never so great, they are but as a Shadow and a very Dream if compar'd with Eternity. The Glory of this World is built on a weak and tottering Foundation; nor Stone nor Marble how durable soever, are able to bear the Characters of Eternity. Well did *Lactantius* say, the Works of Mortal Man are Mortal. We believe that there was a *Babylon*, a *Troy*, a *Carthage* and a *Rome*; but alas! now we see nothing of them, scarce any remains of their Ruins are left, which may convince us, that there were such Cities, by an ocular Demonstration. The same may be said of the seven Wonders of the World, of *Nero's* Golden Palace, *Dioclesian's* Hot Baths, of the Baths of *Antoninus*, *Severus's* Septizonium, *Julius's* Colossus, and *Pompey's* Amphitheatre, they have left no point or footstep behind them that they ever were in being, most of the Books which mention'd them are lost; all these were great and mighty Works, and yet how far are they short of Eternity?

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

How far the Romans have err'd from the true way to Eternity.

Luke 1. 33.

AT Nazareth in Galilee, when the Angel appear'd to the *Blessed Virgin*, he made mention of a *Kingdom that shou'd have no end*. This cou'd not be meant of the *Kingdom of Solomon*, which after it had continu'd four hundred and twenty six Years expir'd, upon the *Jews* being carri'd away Captive by *Nebuchadnezzar* into *Babylon*. Nor can we apply it to the *Kingdom of the Romans, Persians or Gracians*. What is become of those flourishing Empires? Where are now those Ancient and Glorious Monarchs? How great was *Nebuchadnezzar* in *Chaldea* and *Syria*, and after him *Belshazzar*? From him the Empire was translated to the *Medes and Persians*, to *Cyrus*, and *Darius*, whose Reign was but short; from them it pass'd into *Greece*, to *Alexander King of Macedon* Surnam'd the *Great*, who was a very Warlike and Victorious Prince: But as the *Gracians* declin'd in Courage, so their Fortune fail'd, and the Empire of the World was transfer'd to *Italy*, to *Julius Caesar* and *Octavius Augustus*. What is become of those Mighty Men? Where are they now? Do thou O Christian seek after the Kingdom, which shall never have an end. *Numantia, Athens, Carthage, and Sparta*, have had their Periods, and are utterly extinct; but the Kingdom which is above shall have no end, both its King and its Inhabitants shall endure for ever.

ever. *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever, Exodus 15. 14.* Upon which Words Origen Discourses thus. *Dost thou think,* says he, *that the Lord shall Reign for ever and ever.* Form to thy self what Expressions thou pleasest, they are all too narrow, alas! it is not in the power of Words to express the Duration of his Kingdom. *The Lord will reign for ever and ever,* the Prophet will say *for ever,* and still *for ever.* God, says *Isidore,* has given a promise to every Man of this immense, this everlasting Kingdom, which is Happiness it self, and yet they pass it o're in Silence. For what Man is there of a Thousand, who spends the least part of a Day in meditating upon it; that thinks it worth his while to make mention of it; that is careful to press it upon his Wife, Children and Family, and to recommend it to their serious Thoughts, as a thing very worthy of their Contemplation; All our Discourse is spent upon Trifles; we never, or very seldom, think on Heaven. We are all of us very eloquent in the praise of our Native Country; in this particular every Man is an Orator, we believe that we can never say enough in its Commendation; but as for our true Country, we are very sparing of its Praises; if at any time by chance we touch upon it, we are presently out of Countenance; who can talk of Heaven and not blush and be asham'd? We have so little accusom'd our selves to Discourse of the things of another Life, that we relish nothing but Rallery and Buffoonry; the Age we live in, is so strangely corrupted, that the Man that cannot break his Jest, and talk obscenely, is not fit for Conversation. This is wandring out of the way indeed; we shou'd
set

set our affections on things above, our Hearts shou'd be a thirst for *Eternity*; this, this alone shou'd employ our Thoughts, and our Tongues shou'd sing and celebrate its Praises; this is the only way to true Glory, and there is no true Glory, but that which is Eternal.

The Rulers of the *Jews*, the *Priests* and *Pharisees* met frequently in Council, and consulted together how to destroy our Saviour's Power and make their own Polity last for ever; and what was the effect of their Consultations? Instead of overthrowing the Power of Christ as they in their Wisdom propos'd to themselves, they contributed to its Establishment, in bringing that to pass which they so much dreaded. *St. Augustin* upon their thus deliberating together has this eloquent Expression. *The chief Priests and Pharisees consulted their own good, and yet they said not, let us believe.* These wretched Creatures debated together how to hurt and destroy, but had no regard to their own Security; they never once thought of saving themselves. And yet they were afraid and said to one another, as they were Consulting, *What do we? for this Man doth many Miracles; if we let Him thus alone, all Men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and Nation.* They were afraid of losing things Temporal, and had no regard to things Eternal, and so they lost both. Such is the vanity of our foolish Imaginations, that we affect to mock and play upon our selves; for alas! what are we? or what is there that we can call ours? To day we spring up and flourish like a Flower, we please, and are courted; and the World seems to smile upon us. To morrow

Tract. 49.
Joan. sub
tine.

John 11.
47, 48.

we fade away and are neglected; we lose the favour both of God and Man; of God whom we never studied to please, and of Man whose favour we so much courted. We neglect Heaven, and get not the Earth; we do not seek after the favour of God, and at the same time we lose the favour of Men; by this preposterous way of proceeding we deprive our selves of both, and no wonder then if we are miserable indeed. Cou'd Death be mov'd by our passionate Intreaties to spare the happy Men of this World, they might hope to attain some kind of Glory, such as it is; for as I before observ'd, there is no true Glory but that which is Eternal. But alas! no Man is exempted from the stroke of Death; he sees us in the dark, and is not seen; he lies in wait, and surprises us unaware, when we think not of him. Whither, O whither will he carry us if we have here liv'd wicked and ungodly Lives? We must go to the great Tribunal of Christ, who will turn us into Hell, where we shall abide for ever and ever. There we may plead the nobility of our Birth, but what will that avail us? No power whatever shall be able to deliver us; the praise and applause of the unthinking many, upon which we so much valu'd our selves when we were upon the Earth, will then be utterly unserviceable to us. Let us here seek the favour of God and his Glory, which is only to be obtain'd by avoiding false Glory; there is no true Glory but that which is Eternal.

The wise King *Solomon* in his Book of Proverbs represents Wisdom attended like a Queen Ch 3. 13. with two Maids of Honour. He says, that Eternity is on her Right Hand, and Glory on her

Heb. 13,

14.

2 Cor. 5. 11

Psal. 112. 6.

her Left. Of what value is Glory if it be not joyn'd with Eternity? this is the hope of every Christian, *for here we have no continuing City, but we seek one to come, eternal in the Heavens.* The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. To be liberal and charitable, to mortifie and subdue our irregular desires; to preserve our Chastity pure and untainted, are no very great and difficult things; they are done in a very small compass of time, but the remembrance of them, and the Reward that attends them, shall be everlasting.

How inconsiderable was the value of that Ointment which *Mary Magdalen* poured upon our Saviours Head? How soon did she pour it, and yet it was made known *throughout the whole World*? Others perhaps wou'd have admir'd her for her Rosie Cheeks, Charming Aspect and Blooming Youth; for her Air, Demeanour, Riches and Affability. These Accomplishments were the means of her losing her Virtue, and entailing a Blot upon her good Name; our Saviour therefore passes them by, and commends her for the Ointment which she poured upon his Head; the Charity was not great, but the Glory she gain'd thereby was Immortal, Christ himself declares, *That it shall be Preach'd throughout the whole World.*

This charitable Action was neither Engrav'd on Brass, nor cut in Marble; it was neither published in the Market, nor was it proclaim'd by beat of Drum or sound of Trumpet, and yet it hath continued for a Memorial of her to this present Age, and will continue for ever. *It shall be preached throughout the whole World.* If we consider the Action it self, the covetous

Judas

Judas, and Simon the insulting Pharisee condemn'd it; if the matter, 'twas Ointment, which was valu'd at thirty small pieces of Gold; if the place, it was private; if the Witnesses, they were but few; if the Person that did it, an infamous Woman; and yet *it shall be preached throughout the whole World*. How many Emperors have fix'd their triumphant victorious Eagles in their Enemies Camp? How many Generals have with great reputation commanded mighty Armies? How many Governours have rul'd their Subjects with Wisdom and Prudence? How many Kings have erected stately Monuments, Statues, Castles, and Cities? How many great and learned Men have wasted their Brains with new Inventions? This they did in hopes of transmitting their names to Posterity, that honourable Men in after Ages shou'd mention them with applause; and yet their works and names are forgotten, both the Works and their Authors are buried in Oblivion; but it is not so with the works of the Righteous, they shall be had in everlasting remembrance, nor time nor envy shall be able to deface them; Kings and Princes, Generals and Statesmen shall both read and hear them with a becoming Veneration, *they shall be preached throughout the whole World*; thus we see that to live and die well, is the only sure way to Immortality. Go to then ye Romans, seek Eternity, if you please, in your Monuments and Statues, but you shall not find it. As for me, I had rather wish with St. Hierome in the life of Paul the Hermit. Oh remember says St. Hierome a Sinner, who, if God wou'd be pleas'd to grant him his request, wou'd rather choose the Thread-

Thread-bare Cloak of *Paul* the poor *Hermit* with his *Piety* and good *Works* than the *Purple-Robes* of *Kings* with their *Kingdoms*. Let us *Christians*, while we are here, make over our *Riches* least we shou'd lose them; let us send them before us into *Heaven*, which stands open to receive them; but where shall we find a trusty *Messenger* to carry them thither? if we send them by the hands of the poor and needy they will faithfully deliver them. The things which we here bestow upon the *Poor* are little and inconsiderable, if compar'd with the recompence which we most certainly shall receive hereafter; the *Apostle* assures us, that it is an exceeding and eternal weight of *Glory*. To this great promise we have all a just Title
 2 Cor. 4. 17. if we fulfil this Command of our Saviour, I say unto you, make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting Habitations. But let us leave the *Romans* and proceed to others.

CHAP. II.

A better way than the former to Eternity.

DARIUS the King of *Persia*, who was so remarkable for the Slaughter of his Men, in his Engagement with *Alexander*, had in his Army ten Thousand *Persians* whom he call'd Immortal, not that they wou'd not die as well as others, for where can we find such Soldiers? But when any of them were cut off, either in War or by a natural Death, their places were pre-

presently supplied with others, so that there was never more nor less than ten Thousand. Thus *Darius* invented a kind of Immortality, but it was of a very short continuance, for presently after both he and his Army perished together in the Plains of *Arbela*. It was a common and usual Practice with the Princes and Nobles of *Darius* the *Median*, to address him thus in their Salutations, *King Darius live for ever*. What a vain and foolish wish was this? How short was this Eternity? We live but seventy or eighty Years at furthest, but in our Dreams we wish that we may live for ever. The great *Xerxes*, (who to subdue *Greece*, brought out of *Asia* both by Sea and Land two mighty Armies, which (as *Herodotus* and others report) consisted of near eight hundred thousand Men, besides Servants, and others that follow'd the Camp;) as he view'd his Troops from the Top of a Mountain which cover'd the Plains of *Abydos* with their numbers fell into Tears; being ask'd the Reason by one of his Generals, the King made Answer that he cou'd not but weep to think that after fifty or sixty Years few or none of that great multitude of Men, who were now in the prime and vigour of their strength, wou'd remain alive.

We may feign to our selves what *Eternities* we please, but in the mean time we die, and are as water spilt upon the ground.

Another and better Emblem of *Eternity* was found out at *Constantinople*. In the year of our Lord 459, the Church of *Constantinople* in the time of *Gennadius* was considerably augmented by a new and most noble foundation of a Convent of the *Acorneta*, which was Dedicated to

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St.

The Third Consideration

St. John the Baptist. 'Tis said of these *Acovi-
meta* that they never slept but that they
continually Sung Praises to God without Inter-
mission. This was perform'd by their dividing
themselves into three Companies; when the
first had done Singing, the second began; when
the second ended, then the third; so that by
turns they were always at their Devotion. By
this means the City enjoy'd a kind of Heaven
upon Earth. This is a just and lively repre-
sentation of that Eternity which is above,
where the Praises of God shall be always cele-
brated without any weariness, where the more
we praise him the greater will be our joy and
satisfaction. With what reason does the Di-
vine Psalmist cry out? *Blessed are they who dwell
in thy House, they will be always praising thee.*
What St. Peter once said upon the Top of
Mount Tabor tho' upon another occasion, shall
then be the general Voice of the Blessed; *It is
good for us to be here.* For as St. Bernard ob-
serves, *Eternity is exceeding great Riches*, to which
he adds, that we must seek it with perseverance
or we shall not find it. Let us learn from thee
O Blessed Bernard how we ought to seek it.
The Rules which this Father prescribes are
these; *Poverty, Meekness and Tears*, these says
St. Bernard will imprint upon the Soul some
Image of that Eternity, in which all times are
comprehended. First, *Poverty* is a means of ob-
taining Eternity; *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for
theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.* They who de-
spise and neglect the Poor, whose Hearts are
lock'd up, as it were, with their Money, who
lay it out as their Avarice directs them, have
no inclination or love for Poverty, nor is Eter-
nity

Psal. 34. 4.

Matt. 17. 4.
Serm. 2. de
Omn. S. S.

Matt. 5. 3.

nity in all their thoughts. Secondly, by *Meekness* we possess the things of this Life. *Blessed are the Meek for they shall inherit the Earth.* Matt. 5. 5. Shou'd any one ask what is the advantage of the impatient Man, from whom you never hear a mild Word, who foams and frets with the vehemence of his Passion? Shou'd any one, I say, ask me, what advantage is it to him to rage and swell, storm and thunder, to confound all things as far as he is able, to speak civilly to no Man, and to be an enemy to Humanity it self? My answer is, that this angry impatient passionate Man, will most certainly lose his Goods or Reputation, or perhaps both. He does not possess the Riches which he has, but guards them like a Mastiff, whose property it is to bark and bite and fly upon others. If he has any Reputation in the World, the Title of Impatience will not add to it; and as for Heaven he takes care to lose it before he has it in his Possession. Thirdly, by *Tears* we redeem the time past, and recover what we prodigally spent in Sining; but then this mourning must not be only for an Hour, or for a Day; we must do like that Extravagant Son who with Tears flowing from his Eyes, follow'd his Dead Mother to the Grave clad in a sad and sorrowful Habit, but on the very same day or the next day after dry'd away his Tears and appear'd abroad in Green with his Companions; to Mourn so short a time as this, is not to Mourn as we ought to Mourn; and yet I am afraid that we too often imitate his Example; to day we lament for the sins we have committed, we confess them to God, hear the Absolution, and receive the Communion, but the next day return to our

The Third Consideration

former Sins, and grow worse, if possible, than we were before. This moment we detest our ill spent Life, and abhor our selves for our sinful Actions, but in a little while, such is the strange inconstancy of our Nature, we commit again the very same Actions which but just now seem'd detestable to us, and for which we so lately abhor'd our selves. We forswear our past Sins, and yet we repeat them; with the same Tongue we pronounce *Christ* Innocent and Crucify him afresh. We are all of us a-kin to *Pontius Pilate*, who with one and the same Mouth both absolv'd and condemn'd him.

We are all of us wretched and inconstant Creatures, we are constant in nothing but in Wickedness and Vice. Sometimes we are so over Pious, that we dare not put on a chearful Countenance lest that shou'd take off the fervency of our Devotion; we fix like Statues our Eyes upon the Ground, and are extremely angry with our selves if at any time we find our selves to be remiss in the Duties of Religion. But this Sanctity and Devotion are as the Morning Clouds, which presently disappear. After a little time we begin to hate even Piety it self, and the Scene being now chang'd we give our selves a loose to our former Luxury and Intemperance; we are now as easie to dissolve the friendship which we made with God as we were before unwilling to contract it. While these things are transacting, Piety resumes its place in our Hearts, and by the assistance of Repentance expels our wanton and inordinate Desires; but presently again, we repent of our Repentance. Thus we seldom persevere in doing well, we think it too difficult and

and laborious a Work, and being tir'd with goodness we return again upon the least Temptation to our former Impurities. This inconsistency of our Actions presents to our minds all sorts of Pleasure, nor does any one Vice escape our View; in shew we pretend to adore *Virtue*, but in our Hearts we worship *Vice*, which is slavery it self. This is not the way to *Eternity*, unless it be that of Punishments and Torments which will never have an end.

Let us choose what Christian Man we please, but especially such an one who minds nothing but his Pleasures; let us carry him to the Mouth of a flaming Furnace, and then let us Discourte him after this manner; what kind, or what degree of Pleasure wou'd tempt you to continue one day in this burning Furnace? He will undoubtedly Answer, if the whole World and all its Pleasures were offer'd to me, I wou'd not accept them on so hard a Condition.

Let us make some other Proposals to him; what recompence wou'd you ask to endure these Flames but half a Day? offer, says he, what delights you please, I will never purchase such exquisite Torments at any Price whatever. To come to an agreement, what shall I give you to abide in this Furnace but for an Hour? His reply will be, Tho' you cou'd give me all that Covetousness, and even Impudence it self cou'd require, it wou'd be nothing in comparison with the inexpressible Torments of this burning Furnace, even tho' I were to endure them only for an Hour. If these Answers are good and agreeable to right Reason, whence is it O my God that Men shou'd so slight the Torments of Hell? that for a little fordid Gain,

for Honour or Pleasure which is false and Transitory, they shou'd run the risque of everlasting Burnings? If no reward how great soever will prevail upon us to endure a fiery Furnace for an Hour, how comes it to pass when Interest or Honour, or Pleasure allure us, that we never fear the fire of Hell? To this you Reply, that you hope better things; that God in his infinite Goodness and Mercy does not command you to terrifie your self with the gloomy thoughts of what shall be hereafter. This is generally our Answer, nor is it impious in the least, did not our Actions cry out against us. 'Tis a very rash and dangerous thing to live a wicked and sinful Life, and at the same time to hope to be happy for ever. Alas! one Sin is sufficient to condemn us. Know you not what Christ has threaten'd in the Gospel? *Whosoever shall say to his Brother, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell fire.* Can you be ignorant of what Christ has forbidden? *Whosoever looketh upon a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* You have heard that Christ hath plainly forewarned us; *not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* You likewise know, how that many are excluded by our Saviour Christ; *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his Cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.* Have you never observ'd how plainly and openly that saying is repeated? *Many be called, but few chosen.* How often does our Saviour call us

Matt. 5. 22.

V. 23.

Matt. 7. 21.

Matt. 10.

37, 38.

Matt. 20.

16. 22. 14.

us to amend our Lives? *Except ye be converted* Matt. 18. 3.
and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into
the Kingdom of Heaven. If thy hand or thy foot v. 8.
offend thee cut it off and cast it from thee; it is
better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed,
rather than having two hands or two feet to be Luke 13. 3.
cast into everlasting Fire. Except ye repent ye shall
all likewise perish. Then he immediately adds, v. 24.
Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say
unto you, shall strive to enter in and shall not be able.
 Can you be ignorant how particularly and distinctly the Apostle St. Paul enumerates those sins which will exclude us from the Kingdom of Heaven? *Now the works of the flesh are manifest,* Gal. 5. 19.
which are these, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, 20, 21.
Lasciviousneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Vari-
ance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Here-
sies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings,
and ſuch like; of the which I tell you before, as I
have often told you in time paſt, that they which do
ſuch things ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.
 If then we know our ſelves to be guilty of any one of theſe particulars, and do not repent of it in ſuch a manner, as to avoid the Commiſſion of it for the time to come; we may comfort our ſelves with what hopes we pleaſe, but the hopes of ſuch Men are without Foundation, they are not hopes but raſhneſs and preſumption. To be beaten only with a few ſtripes is a tolerable evil; to loſe a Hundred or a Thouſand Crowns at play, is without doubt a great miſfortune, but ſtill it may be born; to run the riſque of loſing ones life is, I confeſs, a conſiderable Evil, but it is not the greateſt. But to run the riſque of loſing both Body and Soul for ever; to pleaſe and flatter our ſelves with
 E 4 hopes,

Hopes, and at the same time to act contrary to them, is the greatest of Evils; this is a considerable loss indeed, no loss like this, it admits of no Comparison but it self; this is a daring Rashness and Presumption, the consequence of which must be fatal to us; this is Folly and Madness in the highest Degree. *O consider this ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.*

C H A P. III.

That the way to Eternity must be diligently and carefully sought after:

IT concerns therefore every Christian to put this Question often to himself, and to ask others, whom God has appointed to be his Ministers, and to supply his place on Earth, what methods he must take, to secure to himself this Eternity of Happiness? Is this the way that leads to that Eternity which I so much long for? Something I do indeed to attain it, but alas! my endeavours are mean and inconsiderable; I aspire after immortal Happiness, but can these, my cold imperfect Works deserve so glorious and unspeakable a Reward? I desire to enter in at the Gate, but I dread the way, 'tis rough and thorny; and yet the rougher and more thorny it is, the surer it leads to the Gate of Heaven. This is the voice of Truth it self; How often does our Saviour call upon us to tread in the narrow and

and tempestuous Path? Enter ye in at the strait Gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. And yet again, Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. How dreadfully astonishing is this Many and this Few? and yet wretched and miserable Creatures that we are, how strangely do we Cheat and Deceive our selves with the hopes of Eternity? 'Tis hard to determine, whether we really and truly hope to be of the Number of those happy Few that shall enter into Heaven; or whether our hopes are nothing but Dreams. I wish to God, that while we enjoy the accepted time, while the Day of Salvation is continu'd to us, we wou'd more seriously think upon Eternity, and reason with our selves in this or the like manner. What is all this that I suffer, or what are the Sufferings of Others if compar'd with Eternity? What if I cou'd number as many Labours and Hardships, as even St. Paul himself went through, of which this Apostle has given us a detail in the last Epistle which he writ to the *Corinthians*? Shou'd I suffer the pains of Hunger and Thirst? Shou'd I bear a thousand Injuries and Reproaches? Shou'd I languish under Sickness and Want? Shou'd I be Ston'd? be beaten with Stripes? or shou'd I suffer Shipwreck? Yet what are these to Torments everlasting? Therefore in all the Calamities of Life, I will comfort my self with this Reflection, that they will have an end.

OR DIII. 25. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

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The Prophet *Daniel*, having reckon'd up sundry and various Calamities, concludes his Account with these Words; *Even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed.* Where are you ye wretched and miserable Men, who almost drown your selves in your Tears; who embitter the Sweets and Comforts of Life, and shorten your Days by your impatient Complains? Let this be your Comfort and Consolation, that your Afflictions are only for a Season. Do you languish under divers Calamities? Do not despair or suffer your Spirits to be cast down, they are only for a Season. Do Men tare you, as it were, to pieces with their Reproaches? are ye wearied with Injuries? do many other Evils disturb your Quiet? be not discourag'd, they are only for a Season, they cannot, will not last for ever, there will be an end of your Lamentations. The Tears which you shed are only for a time; your Grief and Sorrow are of a short duration; the Hour is coming which shall give you a deliverance, and translate you to the Regions of Bliss and Immortality; so true is that saying in *Ecclesiasticus*, *A patient Man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him.* Hear me also ye happy Men of this World, who enjoy the Riches and Pleasures of it, who want for nothing in this Life that can make you Happy, if here there be any such thing as Happiness; be ye not exalted, and lift not up your Horn on high, but know that your Felicity is of a short and limited extent, and that your Rejoicing is only for a time: for the time will come, 'twill quickly come, when Death will command you to lay aside your Vizards and to stand

stand expos'd with your Fellow-Creatures, then the remembrance of your former Happiness will add unto your Misery. All things here are only for a time, but *Eternity* is a Gulf of an unlimited extent, a boundless Race which cannot be measur'd. Whether therefore I am afflicted in Body or in Mind; whether I suffer the loss of my Goods, or have my Reputation taken from me; whether my Misfortunes are inward or outward, they are nothing in comparison of *Eternal* Torments. For when fifty thousand Millions of Years shall be pass'd after the Day of Judgment, there will still remain another fifty thousand Millions, and when they are gone, more and more Millions will still succeed, and this Succession will go on for ever. Who is there that seriously considers these things, and weighsthem with himself? Sometimes we find a propensity in our selves to apply our Minds to the contemplation of *Eternity*, but things past and future presently distract us, our Heart wavers and is full of Vanity. O who will fix and settle it for us, that it may stand a while and be ravish'd and transported with the splendour of *Eternity*, which never changes but is always the same.

Myrogenes did wisely in refusing the Presents which were sent him by *Eustachius* Archbishop of *Jerusalem*; He refus'd them with a becoming Modesty, and intreated the Messenger to acquaint his Lord, that he desir'd but this one thing, that he wou'd pray for his deliverance from Punishment *Eternal*. Neither was *Tully* mistaken when he said, that nothing in this Life cou'd seem considerable to a Wise Man, who employ'd his Thoughts in surveying the Universe,

The Third Consideration.

verse, and in contemplating *Eternity*; But much better was the saying of the Pious *Francis*, the Founder of the Order of the *Franciscans*, who embrac'd a voluntary Poverty, and was a true Admirer of *Eternity*. The Pleasure of this Life, saith he, is short, but the punishment that shall be hereafter is perpetual; the Labour is small, but the Glory is Eternal. Choose which you please; many are called, few chosen, but all are rewarded according to their works, whether they be good, or Evil.

Guericus
Serm. 4. de
Pniso.

Whosoever therefore is conscious to himself of his being guilty of any one Sin, let him hasten his Repentance: 'Tis better and sweeter far, saith *Guericus*, to be purg'd by Water than by Fire. We must now repent, if we will prevent being punish'd hereafter. He that fears a lesser Evil shall suffer a greater; He that will not bear the light burden of Repentance, shall incur the severest punishment of Hell. Some says *St. Gregory*, by being too fearful of temporal Evils, expose themselves to those which are Eternal. To this let me add a wise saying of *Pacian*; Remember, saith he, that there is no place in Hell for the confession of Sins; this Life is the only time for Repentance; and if we do not lay hold of this opportunity, it will not be in our power to Repent hereafter. We dread falling into the hands of a common Executioner: A temporal Fire makes us afraid; but what are these to the pointed Claws of furious Devils, and to raging Fires that will never have an end? The Advice which *St. Ambrose* gave to a young Woman, who had been betray'd into some weak Compliances, is very proper to be mention'd in this place. The great Duty

Duty of Repentance is not to be perform'd in Words but in Deeds; the only true way to effect it is this. Contemplate the Glory from whence you are fall'n; consider with your self, that your Name is blotted out of the Book of Life, and that you are near, very near being cast into outer Darknes, where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth for ever. If you believe these things to be true as most certainly they are; that the Soul that sins shall be cast into Hell-fire, and be tormented for ever; and that there is no other way after Baptism of avoiding this tremendous Punishment but by Repentance; you will then be content to suffer the greatest and most painful Afflictions to be deliver'd from it. When our Bodies languish under any Disease we remove it by Purging; let us take the same method with our Souls, and cleanse them by Repentance. Have we any regard to our own Salvation? Do we dread Eternal Death and Punishment? Have we any hopes of Life Everlasting, of a State of Glory and Immortality? If we have, let all these Motives perswade us to Repentance. There is nothing which more defiles the Soul than a polluted Body; let us therefore avoid all manner of Filthiness, and embrace those things which will purge and cleanse and refine our Souls; Faithful and wise is this Advice of St. *Ambrose*, and very worthy of our Imitation.

Grant we beseech Thee, O *Blessed Jesus*, that we may so possess these perishing things, that we finally lose not the things which are Eternal; grant that we may tread in their happy Steps, and follow their good and pious Example, of whom St. *Augustin* gives this excellent Charecter:

Character : There are many, faith he, who willingly submit themselves to the Yoke, who from Proud, and Haughty, and imperious Men, become humble and lowly ; who desire to be what they formerly despis'd, and hate and detest what they formerly were ; who look upon themselves as Foreigners in this Life, and are always hastening to, and aspiring after a Heavenly and Eternal Kingdom ; who prefer Abstinence to Luxury, Watching to Sleep, Poverty to Riches ; who think it a Pleasure to contend with their Vices ; who love their Enemies, and endure a Thousand Injuries and Reproaches in and thro' the hopes of an Eternal Retribution. An Eternal Retribution ! Who wou'd refuse to suffer the severest and most painful Hardships to obtain so great and glorious a Reward ?

Fig. 4.

Psalm. 77. v. 5.



*I have considerd the days of
old and the years that are past.*

THE FOURTH CONSIDERATION UPON ETERNITY.

CONSIDERATION IV.

*How Holy David meditated upon Eternity,
and how we shou'd follow his Example.*

THAT God shou'd doom the *Apostate Angels*, and Men at the Day of Retribution, to Eternal Torments, seem'd so hard and incredible a Doctrine to some Persons, that even *Origen* himself, who was mighty in the Scriptures, and no less famous for his admirable Wit and excellent Learning, presum'd to maintain in his Book of Principles, that both the Devils and the Damn'd, after a certain period of Years, the Fire having purg'd and cleans'd them from their Pollutions, shou'd be restor'd to Grace. *St. Augustin*, and others Lib. 1. De Civi: Dei Cap. 23. convinc'd him of his Error, and condemn'd him for it. But notwithstanding their Condemnation,

tion, this Error has found a great many in the World who have given it a kind and civil Reception. The *Arians*, *Hereticks* so call'd, dispers'd this Error throughout all *Spain* under various Interpretations. Some believ'd that all the Damn'd shou'd have a general Deliverance; others believ'd that Christians only, others that Catholicks only; others again affirm'd, that this Deliverance was restrain'd to those Persons who had been more Liberal and Charitable than others in relieving the Poor. All which Errors, tho' they had not been confuted by *St. Augustin*, are openly condemn'd in the Holy Scripture; *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire*; And again, *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*. These two Texts are so plain and expresse in this particular, that they will not admit of any different Explications. Tho' the Divine Psalmist took a wonderful delight in the Contemplation of things past, and of things to come, yet he tells us, that *his eyes prevented the night Watches*, *Psal. 119. 148*. And again, addressing himself to God, he has these Words: *Thou holdest my eyes waking, I am so troubled that I cannot speak*, *Psal. 77. 4*. O Blessed Prophet! What was it that thus disturb'd thy Sleep? What early Business kept thee waking? Why art thou so silent, and why is thy Heart so disquieted within Thee? Hear the reason of it: *I have consider'd*, says he, *the days of old, and the years of Eternity I have had in my Mind*, *Psal. 77. 5*. This was that which broke his Rest, and made his Sleep go from him; he consider'd the days that were past, and the days that were to come, and compar'd them with Eternity; nor was

was this his Practice in the day only, but in the night, saith he, *I call to remembrance my Song; I ver. 6. commune with my whole heart, and search out my Spirit.* And what was it that encourag'd him in this nightly Exercise? *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be no more intreated? Is his mercy cleangone for ever?* See how he trembles at the thoughts of Eternity, how fearful he is of God's Judgment, lest he should cast him off for ever. And what was the consequence of this Meditation? What effect had it upon him? *And I said this is mine infirmity, but I will remember, or rather, I now will begin to remember, &c.* Thus in an instant he became a new Man; he did not delay and put off his Repentance till his latter Years; but *now, now will I begin*, now will I live a more Holy Life than I have hitherto done; not after this Hour, or after such a Day will I begin to do this, but *now, even now.* Some perhaps may say; cou'd I meditate upon Eternity as David did, I might readily and chearfully pronounce with him, *now, now will I begin.* But alas! I am so incumbred with daily Cares, so perplex'd and entangled with the Affairs of Life, which hurry me hourly from this place to that place, that I cannot call home my distracted Thoughts to so excellent a Meditation. Besides, my Circumstances oblige me to be much in Company, I hear and see a great deal of Evil, and cannot spare time to think upon Eternity. When we go the Park, the Tavern, or the Play-house, we never discourse on such serious things; our Minds are busied with variety of Subjects; we cannot then reflect on what shall be hereafter. When we are feasting, our Jest and our Glass

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employ

employ our Thoughts; all serious things are Banished from the Company, and Joy appears in every Face. We enquire what News from Spain, France or Italy. The things which belong to Heaven and Hell are Old and Threadbare, we know them, say they, already, why will you render them nauseous to us, by a too frequent Repetition? By this way of proceeding it comes to pass, that we can neither find a proper time, nor proper place to think upon Eternity. O Christian Brothers, what you say is true, nor can I deny it. I wish you were as ready to amend your fault, as you are to confess it; for tho' every day presents us with some thing or other which brings Eternity to our Remembrance, yet, sure I am, that it is too manifest, that nothing in the World is more generally neglected.

The Book of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Rome in the Office of the Consecration of Bishops, has these Words, *Anno Eternos in mente habe*, think upon Eternity. And when the new Elected Pope is carried in Procession with great Pomp and Solemnity to St. Peter's Church, there goes one before him having in his Hand some Burning Flax, and shaking it in the presence of the Pontiff, he thrice pronounces this following Sentence; *Pater sancte, sic transit gloria Mundi*, Holy Father, thus the Glory of the World passes away. If at the beginning and ending of all our Actions we cou'd bring our selves to repeat this Sentence, *Anno Eternos in mente habe*, we shou'd find a considerable benefit from it, more especially at such times when opportunity of time and place, and the wicked suggestions of our Old Adversary the Devil tempt

tempt us to Sin, or when we are in danger of doing any thing which will wound our Conscience, or makes us blush and be asham'd; at such times as these it will nearly concern us to think upon Eternity.

C H A P. I.

Diverse short Admonitions to think upon Eternity.

PHILIP King of Macedon appointed a young Noble-man to Address him every Morning with this Salutation; *Philip, remember that thou art a Man*; that being put in mind of his own Mortality, he might demean himself towards other Mortals with the greater care and Circumspection. Consider we with our selves, how much more does it concern every good and pious Christian, who is a Member of Christ's Catholick Church, to be his own Monitor, and to say to himself every Morning, three times at the least, *Eternity, Eternity, Eternity. Set* Isai. 38. 1. *thine House in order, saith the Royal Prophet to King Hezekiah, for thou shalt die and not live.* There will come an Evening when thou shalt never see the next days Morning, or there will come a Morning, when thou shalt never see the following Evening: Take heed therefore so to order your affairs in every particular Circumstance of Life, that you do not wound your Conscience; and put not too great a trust and confidence in perishing things, lest by so doing you both lose your self and the things which are Eternal.

'Tis a Common practice with the *Germans*, when a Candle in the Evening is first brought into the Room, to say, *Deus det nobis lucem eternam, God give us light Eternal.* This is a truly Pious and excellent Custom, and is very worthy of our Imitation.

There is also a kind of Eternity in Slavery and Imprisonment, but it is dreadful and dishonourable; to be condemned for ever to the Gallies, or to be Imprisoned for Life, is in many Mens opinion so cruel and severe a Punishment, that it is worse than Death it self.

They who groan under any Disease, or are oppressed with any sore Calamities, are likewise apt to imagine that there is a kind of *Eternity* in their Sufferings; hence it comes to pass that we often hear these impatient Exclamations; *What will this never have an end? Must I be confin'd to my Bed for ever? Shall I never be freed from these intolerable Pains? Must I be always thus tormented?* But these *Eternities* are of a short duration, and will quickly have an end.

But I return to consider perpetual Imprisonment, which, as I said before, is an Emblem of Eternity: How many Pious and Religious Persons, Holy Men and Holy Women do in some manner condemn themselves to it? Who, that they might the better serve God, have retir'd from the World, and taken a solemn and final farewell of all the Pleasures and Vanities of it; who sweetly pass away their Days in dedicating themselves to Gods Worship and Service, in praying unto him, and in celebrating his Praises, which is a kind of Heaven upon Earth.

C H A P. II.

*That Eternity exceeds all the Numbers of
Arithmetick.*

THERE is a known and common proposition in Arithmetick concerning Eternity, which Boys are generally taught at School. 'Tis this, If from a Mountain of very fine Sand, which is as big as the Earth or bigger, an Angel every year were to take away one single Grain only, I demand in how many Thousand, or rather, in how many Millions of Years this Mountain would appear to be visibly Decreas'd, or to have suffer'd the least Diminution? Let a Master of Accounts sit down and compute, how many years must pass away, before this Mountain, or even half of it, at a Grain a Year, can be removed by the Angel. Supposing such a Case, we shou'd be apt at first View to imagine that there would be no end of removing this Mountain, and that the Angel had undertook a Work which cou'd not be effected. But herein we are mistaken, for tho' the Work seems impossible to us, yet it may be done, each Grain of this vast Mountain may be numbred. But Eternity transcends the power of Numbers, and the Reason is plainly this, because there is no Comparifon, no manner of Proportion between things finite and infinite, and Eternity we know has no Bounds or Limits, and therefore cannot be comprehended. From whence we Argue, that when the Damn'd have suffer'd the Torments of Hell, all this vast unconceivable

term of Years in which we suppose it possible for this stupendious Mountain to be remov'd, yet even then their Torments shall be so far from drawing to an end, that we cannot truly and properly say, now begins their Eternity. Eternity can suffer no diminution; after a Thousand Millions of Years no part of Eternity can be said to be expir'd; 'tis one entire perfect Moment without Beginning, Middle, or End: In a Word, its Measure is always.

Cornelius a
Lapide, in
Cap. 15.
Exodi
v. 18.

This method of counting in respect to Eternity, is also made use of by *Cornelius a Lapide*, a very Eminent Divine; his Words are different, but his Conclusions are the same. I the more willingly Transcribe what he says upon this Subject, because it can never be sufficiently inculcated upon the minds of Men. Observe, says he, what is the length of Eternity? How long shall God and his Saints Reign? How long shall the Damn'd burn in Hell? for Ever. How long is that? Imagine a Hundred Thousand Years; but that is nothing in respect of Eternity; Imagine Ten Hundred Thousand Years, yea, as many Ages; but that also is nothing in comparison of Eternity; Imagine a Thousand Millions of Years, still they are nothing. Eternity is the same and will always be so. Proceed and number as many more as you can, add Millions to Millions as long as you please, and then suppose the Damn'd to burn in Hell all this vast duration; when you have done all this, you have not yet found the beginning of Eternity. Imagine again as many Millions of Millions of Years as there are Drops in the Sea, and you cannot yet come to the beginning of Eternity: Such is the duration

tion of that Eternity of Happiness, which the Saints and Angels enjoy in Heaven; and such is the duration of that Eternity of Torments which God hath decreed to the Damn'd in Hell. Spare us O *Blessed Jesus*, spare us! Spare us, O *Jesus*, and have mercy upon us, and suffer us not to be thrown down headlong into this Eternity of Torments.

Shou'd God say to the Damn'd, let the Earth be cover'd with the finest Sand, and let the World be fill'd therewith; let heap be pil'd upon heap, till it reaches up to the highest Heavens, and let an Angel, every Thousand Years, take a Grain from it and when the whole shall be remov'd, after so many Thousand Years as there were Grains, I will release you out of Hell. Shou'd God, I say, make any such Promise to those Miserable Spirits, what a mighty Consolation wou'd it be to them? How wou'd they exult and rejoyce? Their Damnation wou'd seem somewhat easy to them. But alas! after Millions and Millions of Years, there remain more Millions, and still more Millions for Ever and Ever. This is that heavy weight of Eternity, with which the Damn'd are so sorely oppress'd; let every one that sinneth reflect upon it, and let him also consider, that unless he Repent, he shall also Groan under this inexpressible weight, from Everlasting to Everlasting.

Gulielmus Peraldus, Bishop of *Lyons*, a very Learned and Religious Man, has given us another Computation of the many numberless Years of the Damn'd, which he recommends to our serious Meditation. Shou'd the Damn'd every day distill from their Eyes but one Tear

only, says this Pious Bishop, and shou'd the Tears which they thus distill day after day be preserv'd together in a convenient place, they wou'd at length exceed the vast Ocean of Waters. The Drops of the Sea have their Number and Measure, it is an easy thing for God to say, they are just so many and no more; but the Tears of the Damn'd can never be number'd. Whence comes it to pass that we do not more frequently consider these things? How can we sin so freely and unconcernedly? How can we, for a little short sensual satisfaction, render our selves obnoxious to an Eternity of Torment?

There is another way of casting up this vast Circle of Years, if I may so express my self, which is briefly this: Suppose a Skin of Parchment in breadth a Span, but of such a prodigious length that it wou'd compass the circuit of the Globe; suppose it fill'd with Figures of 9 so close together that no space should be left, where shall I find the *Arithmetician* who can tell me the Sum of this vast Number? Where is the Mountain that has so many Grains? What Sea has so many Drops of Water? But yet this is nothing to Eternity, whose extent and circumference is larger and larger; it transcends all Bounds; and if you ask me how far it reaches, its extension is infinite. If thy Heart, O Christian, be not as hard as the Rocks and Stones, it will sink down and melt within thee, at the consideration of Eternity: An Eternity of Torment is so dreadful, so amazing a Consideration, that if there is in thee any tender Earnings and soft Relentings, they will and must exert themselves when thou thinkest upon Eternity. But as I observ'd before

fore, there are very few who trouble themselves with such thoughts as these; they live as secure of their own Salvation, as if there were no Heaven, no God, no Hell, no Eternity. They daily multiply sins upon sins, and are such proficient in wickedness, as if they design'd to perfect Iniquity, and to be every day worse than they were before. Thus they play and sport with Eternity, as if it were a Prison only for a few Weeks. Such Men as these, saith St. *Gregory*, instead of mourning for their Sins, spend all their time in Musick and Dancing; instead of employing their thoughts upon Death, and what shall be hereafter, they run laughing to their Execution. O miserable Blindness! O forgetful Madness! How do we labour for the things of this Life, which, at the best, is but a Shadow of Eternity? But for Eternity it self we labour not at all; and yet shou'd we miss of this Eternity of Happiness, we must certainly incur Eternal Death; which, as it is a Scene of continued Misery, infinitely more grievous than any of the Evils which we experienc'd in this Life, so it has also this peculiar Property, that we shall not enjoy a Moments respite from endless Pains in the vast, unfathomable, infinite space of all Eternity.

C H A P. III.

What effect the Consideration of Eternity ought to have upon us.

IN the strength of this Consideration it was, that so many Christian Saints and Martyrs, in the first Ages of the Church, were so ready to endure the most exquisite Torments, and painful Death, which Cruelty it self cou'd inflict upon them: what was it that cou'd make them so cheerful and serene in the midst of their Sufferings? What was it that cou'd inspire them with such a superiour presence of Mind, that when they lay weltring in their Blood and gasping out their Souls, they insulted their Tormentors? What was it that cou'd produce these wonderful Effects but the consideration of Eternity?

'Twas this that prevail'd with so many Men, some of which had liv'd very freely and loosely, to renounce the Pleasures and Vanities of the World, to embrace a Life of Pennance and Severity, and to give themselves up to Prayer and Meditation. What was it that wrought this wonderful Change in them but the Consideration of Eternity? There are many now living who are ready to attest the Truth of what I say; they themselves will assure you that it was this Consideration which gave them a disgust to the things of this Life; and tho' it may seem hard to flesh and Blood to renounce the World and the Vanities thereof, yet the thoughts of Eternity will remove these difficulties,

culties, and make all things sweet and pleasant to us. It makes our Labour seem light and short; it recommends the Duties of Vigilance and Devotion, and it makes them amiable; it sweetens the pain of Hunger and Thirst, and makes Poverty a Pleasure; it softens and asswages the Calamities of this Life, and not only makes them tolerable, but so orders them for our good, that even our very Sufferings are a Spring of Joy and Consolation to us. Who-soever thinks on the Years of Eternity, and endeavours more and more to fix 'em in his mind by frequent Meditation, is undismay'd at the greatest Labours; he endures the evils and misfortunes which befall him with a Confidence invincible. Shou'd you offer him a Kingdom he wou'd refuse it; not all the delight and pleasures of the Universe wou'd tempt him to change his Happy State. He bears all things, and submits to all things without complaining, lifting up his Eyes and Hands to his Crucified Saviour, the true and perfect Pattern of Patience. What a very trifle is this or that Evil? Shall this or that thing discompose me? no, I will resolve to bear it with Patience, be it what it will, it cannot last for ever. My Enemies may execute their Rage upon me; they may load me with Oppressions, but it is only for an Hour; go ye Detractors, I defy your Malice, tare me to pieces ye envious Mortals! I will not fly from you, this is your Hour and the power of Darkness; I wait for and expect the Day of the Lord, the Day of Eternity. Why shou'd I vex and discompose my self with fruitless Lamentations? Even all our Life is but the Death of one Hour; the Victory is not difficult,

scult, the Triumph is Eternal. Why shou'd I dread the angry Ocean, when the Port is so near? I ken it already, 'tis the Heaven of my wishes; let the Storms and Tempests rage against me, I will not be afraid; It may thunder for a time upon the Heads of the Good and Virtuous, but the Thunder will soon be past and gone; It shall not be so with the Enemies of God, he will rain upon them *Fire and Brimstone, Storm and Tempest, this shall be their portion to Drink.* True and faithful is the Prophecy of the Prophet Daniel; *Many, saith he, that sleep in the dust of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting Contempt.*

In the Old Law God commanded Moses, saying, *Make thee two Trumpets of Silver, of a whole piece shalt thou make them; if they blow but with one Trumpet, then the Princes which are the Heads of the Thousands of Israel shall gather themselves unto thee. When ye blow an alarm, then the Camp shall go forwards.* To these two Trumpets the words *Now and Always* may be fitly compar'd. The Law of the World is this, *Let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us please our selves with all that is sweet: let us fill our selves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no flower of the Spring pass by us; let us Crown our selves with Roses before they be wither'd; let none of us go without his part of Voluptuousness; let us leave Tokens of our joyfulness in every place.* They who attend only to the Sound of this one Trumpet, and lift up their Ears to this word *Now*, do for the most part live here, as if no *Always* were to follow hereafter. They remove not their Camp, they forget in the midst of their Enjoyments, that they

they are but *Pilgrims and Strangers on the Earth*; Heb. II. 13 they give themselves up to the Lusts of the Flesh, and mind nothing else but how to get Riches and to wanton in Pleasures; the Sound of this *Now* has so beat upon their Ears, that the best Advice is lost upon them, they hear not the *Always* which will quickly follow. But they, who hear the Sound of both Trumpets, which the Church sounds to them every Day, and incline their Hearts to understand the Sound, and thereupon compare this little *Now* with the infinite everlasting *Always*, move their Camp without any delay; they live as *Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth*; they crucify the Flesh, they consider themselves as Travellers, and do therefore send their Riches and Pleasures before them into their Country which is above; they had rather enjoy them *Always* in Heaven, than *Now* upon the Earth. Most certain it is, that whoever seriously and attentively listens to the Sound of these Trumpets, and truly compares things present with future, things Transitory with things Eternal, he will immediately prepare for his Departure, and provide himself with things necessary for his Journey; he will remember that he is now in the way to Eternity, and will therefore entertain a conference with his Soul, and ask himself these Questions; Am I able to give an Account to God of all my Thoughts and Words, and Actions? And when I give him an Account what Sentence will God pronounce against me? *Now* therefore will I die to my self, that I may live *Always* to God and my self. It cannot but be well with that Man who daily and seriously thus thinks upon Eternity. Whatever we do we must pass
this

this way ; Alas, we know not how little time we have to live. Death may be nearer perhaps than we imagine, who, at our last and gloomy Hour will lead us to the Gate of Eternity and compel us to enter. The Words and Actions of dying Persons do daily and hourly inculcate upon us this important Truth.

In the Year of our Lord 1606, March 23, died *Justus Lipsius* a great admirer of the *Stoick* Philosophy, who was very famous for his great Learning, of which his Writings are an abundant Evidence. While he liv'd, he often wish'd with *Augustus*, to have a short and easie Death, and he had his wishes, for he died after four days Illness. During this time he made no mention of his Writings or Studies, so far from that, that when one of his Friends, who came to visit him, told him, that he needed not use Arguments to persuade him to Patience under his Pains ; the Philosophy which he had studied so much wou'd furnish him with Motives sufficient to that purpose ; he Answers him with this Ejaculation, *Domine Jesu da mihi patientiam Christianam*, Lord Jesus give me Christian Patience. In the beginning of his Illness he receiv'd the *Holy Sacrament*, and continu'd every day to intreat the Prayers of all good Christians, till at length perceiving his Dissolution to draw near, he address'd himself to God in the following manner.

O Lord God who art a Rock and strong Tower of Defence to all that put their Trust in thee, have mercy, I beseech thee, on thy poor forlorn distressed Servant, who is now struggling and contending with Eternity : Thou art my Hope, my Shield and Buckler, and the strength of my Salvation ; O give me the
comfort

comfort of thy gracious assistance, leave me not, neither forsake me O God in this my last Hour, on which depends my Everlasting Salvation.

This is a noble and excellent Example, and very fit to be follow'd by every good Christian.

Let us then in all humility prostrate our selves at the Throne of Grace; there with uplifted Hands and Hearts let us worship and adore our Crucified Saviour, beseeching him of his goodness to grant us the assistance of his Blessed Spirit, to strengthen and support us in the last Conflict of our Lives, that when the Snares of Death compass us about, and our Trembling Souls are on the Confines of Eternity, we may Triumph with him, and with him be made partakers of Everlasting Felicity.

THE

THE FIFTH
CONSIDERATION
UPON
ETERNITY.

CONSIDERATION V.

*Some Instances of very wicked and ungodly Men;
who have meditated upon Eternity.*

IN the Old History of the Fathers, we have an Account of a Religious Man, who as he was meditating on the 90th Psalm, came at length to these Words; *for a Thousand Years in thy sight are but as Yesterday, seeing that is past as a Watch in the Night.* Here he stop'd without proceeding any further, not being able to conceive the Reason why a Thousand Years and one Short Day shou'd be compar'd together. Upon which, they tell us, that a little Bird was sent to him by God, who with his sweet and ravishing Harmony so charm'd and transported this Pious Man, that tho' he heard him a considerable while, yet he thought that the Bird had scarce Sung an Hour, so very short did the time seem to him. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth; not only good Men, with Holy David, have meditated upon Eternity,*
but

John 3. 8.

Go
th
ha

Fig. 5.

Matt. Ch. 19. v. 16. —



*Good Master what good-
thing shall I do, that I may
have Eternal Life? —*

but even wicked and ungodly Men have some times made it the Subject of their Thoughts when they least intended any such thing.

Benedictus Rhénanus gives us a Relation of a vain ungodly worldly Man, who was so great a stranger to Watching and Fasting, and other Religious Mortifications, that he cou'd not endure the want of any thing, but especilly Sleep. It happen'd one night, that this *Fulco* (for that was his Name) cou'd not compose himself to rest, as he used to do; he was so disturb'd with frightful Dreams, that his Sleep went from him; he tumbled and tossed, and chang'd his side, but to no purpose, then he wish'd for Day: (Here the wind of the Lord began to blow tho' in an unknown Land, for this Man seldom thought on any thing but his Pleasures.) Being tir'd with lying broad awake, he began at last thus to think with himself; wou'd any Man consent, upon any terms what ever, to lie two or three years together awake in this dismal Darknes, and all that time to be deprived of the sweet enjoyment of his Friends, supposing the sickness, under which he languish'd, to be light and easie? Wou'd any Man consent, though he lay upon a Bed of Down, to be bound as it were to it for so long a Season, and not to have the Liberty of diverting himself with Plays and Operas, with Feasting and Revelling, and other Sports and Entertainments? Offer what Reward and Recompence you please, sure I am, that no Man wou'd submit to so great a Hardship. But what am I, that I shou'd hope to be exempted from the common Calamities which are incident to others? The time will come, when, whether I will or no, I

must lie, as well as others, upon the Bed of Sickneſs, unleſs I die ſuddenly, which God forbid ! But when I go from hence, what will become of me after I am dead ; my Body will rot and putrifie in the Earth, this is the condition of all Mortal things, and I muſt ſubmit to it ; but what will become of my Soul in the other World ? I cannot believe that all Men go to the ſame place after Death ; ſome go this way, and ſome go that way ; there is a Heaven, and is there not a Hell ? Ah me ! what kind of Bed will the Damn'd have there ? How many years muſt they lie in Hell ? Will the flames thereof continue for ever ? When, O when will they be extinguished ? Chriſt indeed has threaten'd to puniſh the wicked with everlaſting fire, and he will certainly do ſo ; the thing is plain and evident. Shall the Damn'd then burn in fire for ever ? Are not a Thouſand and a Thouſand Years ſufficient to waſh away the Sins of one ſhort Life ? And ſhall the Damn'd never ſee the Sun ? Shall they never behold the glory of the Heavens ? Shall they always be excluded from the preſence of God, and be miſerable for ever ? Such thoughts as theſe kept him conſtantly awake, and proceeded ſo far to poſſeſs his mind, that night and day he thought on nothing but Eternity. He endeavour'd all he cou'd to rid himſelf of ſuch uneaſie Companions, but all his endeavours were in vain ; he went very often to Plays and Muſick-meetings ; he associated himſelf with Men of Wit and Pleaſure, and ſought to drown his Cares in Wine ; by this means he ſtifled for a time the Complaints of his Conſcience, but when he came to himſelf he cou'd not fly from them. Eternity was

was always present to his mind, and it press'd him fore. At length he determin'd to change his former course of Life, and to improve the remainder of it to better advantage. Miserable Wretch, said he, that I am, how do I waste and consume my time? I enjoy the World, and I do not enjoy it; I suffer many things which I wou'd not suffer, and I want many things which I fain wou'd have. I make my self a perfect Slave, and what is my Reward? Now I see what recompence they are likely to expect, who all their Lives have been Slaves to the World. For, admitting it were in my power to enjoy such a Circle of Pleasures as my Soul cou'd wish for, how long will they continue? The many Funerals which I daily meet with, are to me a sensible and convincing Argument, that this Life is so confin'd to the present, that I cannot be sure that I shall live till to morrow. O Eternity, if thou wert not in being! if thou wert in any other place but Heaven, even on a Bed of Down, how bitter and unpleasant wou'dst thou be. We are not without difficulty brought off from those Habits which by frequent Practice are become a second Nature to us; A Man who has constantly us'd himself to keep much Company, to Drink hard, and gratifie his Luxury, is not easily wean'd from it. But delays are dangerous; Death may come on a sudden, and snatch us away. Why then do you delay? Things that are necessary do not admit of any deliberation, especially if they be matters of Importance. Well, I am resolv'd, if I live, that I will be quite another Man; this life is very short, but Eternity is for ever. I must now think of changing my manners; I am resolv'd

upon it, and now I begin. To conclude this Relation, he immediately retir'd from the World, and put his good Resolutions into Practice; he liv'd as became a Religious Man who had dedicated himself to God and Eternity, and his death was the death of the Righteous.

O Eternity, how few are they who think thus seriously upon thee! and yet there are fewer who treasure thee up in their minds, and delight as it were to dwell upon thee. We greedily seek after other things, but Eternity is vile in our Eyes, we look upon it as a dry and barren, and unprofitable Speculation. Our Hearts are bent upon getting Riches, but riches are frail and perishing; besides, in a little time we must leave them behind us. We are ambitious after Honour, but what is Honour, 'tis an empty bubble, and is soon gone from us. We love to satisfy our Souls with Pleasures, but they are pain and bitterness in the end. We wish for rest, but it is of a very short duration. Nothing seems to us more desirable than Friendship, but Death divides the most intimate Friends. What more pleasing than Conversation? but it is not about the things which are above. We seek after a bundance, but we seek it where it soon will fail. Did we oftner and more earnestly contemplate Eternity, our desires wou'd cool to the things of this World, they wou'd not be so bent upon em; let St. Bernard be my Witness in this particular. *He that is truly a thirst for Eternity has no taste or relish for Transitory things.*

Bern
Epi. 2.

There are some who have a kind of Eternity in their Mouths, who make solemn protestations that they will avoid such and such things for ever. I will never come near such a place again,
the

the remembrance of the Sin which I there committed will make me shun it as long as I live. Nor will I ever for the future keep Company with this lewd Man, or that wicked Woman; nor with any other of my Companions in Wick- edness. I take a last and final farewell of Re- velling and Drunkenness, Chamberings and Wantonness. Let it suffice that I have once or oftner been at those places. that I have sinn'd with such and such Persons, and did as they did. These are wise and prudent Resolutions, and the Man that makes them deserves to be com- mended; for he that is afraid to sin is most cer- tainly in the right in avoiding all occasions which may tempt him to it. But I wish O Man that thou wert as careful to make good thy promises, as thou art ready to make them. Alas! how common is it for Men to forget their Vows and Resolutions, and in a few Days, I had almost said Hours, to commit again those very Sins, against which they made such solemn Protestations. It concerns us therefore to be very prudent and cautious in such Cases, not only in the promises we make, but in using our utmost strength and power faithfully to per- form them. We must not make rash promi- ses to God, but when we have made a Vow un- to him, we must be sure to keep it with an ir- violable fidelity. We have several dreadful Examples before us, how severe God is in pu- nishing such as make Vows unto him, and do not take care to make them good.

C H A P. I.

Man's Labours and the Spiders compar'd together.

Isaiah 28.
14, 15.

Psal. 90. 9.

THERE is another Eternity, and that is the worst of all, which those Men vainly promise to themselves, who wou'd be happy before they go hence, and wou'd be in Heaven before they are there. *Wherefore hear ye the word of the Lord ye scornful Men, saith the Prophet, Isaiah, because ye have said, we have made a covenant with Death, and with Hell we are at agreement. O ye foolish and unwise! what is this Eternity which ye thus madly promise to your selves? alas! here is nothing permanent and lasting. How elegantly does the Psalmist describe this your vain and imaginary Eternity. We spend our Years, saith he, as a tale that is told. Or as others read it, We spend our years in musing like the Spider. What are all your Years but one continual Exercise and laborious Musing? Labour and Grief, Fears, Cares and Suspicions divide our Life; just as the Spider weaves Thread upon Thread, even so is Life, 'tis a constant continu'd Scene of Trouble; we are always fighting to be freed from some Evil, or to enjoy some expected Good; we are always undertaking some mighty things, and where is the Success? We weave in effect the Spider's Web, tho' we do not know it, we take mighty pains, but to little or no purpose. We spend our years in musing like the Spider. The Spider spares no Pains or Labour in weaving her Web; she is always in*

in Motion, she runs about it this way and that way, and returns again to the point from whence she went. She consumes her self, and works out her Bowels in spinning a Thousand curious Threads to build her little Mansion ; which, when it is finish'd, is liable to be blown away by every puff of Wind : She hangs it a loft, and fastens it to the roof of the House ; she renews her former Pains and Labours, takes many and many a compass about it, and again exhausts her own poor Bowels in strengthening it all she can with Thread upon Thread. This admirable Texture is at length compleated, it hangs aloft, and all things seem secure, when on a sudden 'tis swept away with the least touch of a Broom, and the work which cost her so much pains is destroy'd in a Moment : But this is not all, the unhappy Spider either perishes in the Ruins, or is taken in the Net which she made her self, and trodden under foot ; Thus this little Animal makes, as it were, her own winding Sheet, and weaves a Snare to catch her self.

In like manner do many in the World exhaust their Spirits, and consume their Vitals in acquiring great and honourable Titles, in following their Pleasures, heaping up Riches, and in contriving ways and means to keep and to encrease them. To compass these ends they employ all their Wit ; they run up and down and heat and vex and fatigue themselves, just as the Spider spins out her Bowels ; they waste their best and finest Spirits, and enervate the strength and vigour of Life. And to what purpose are all these mighty Pains ? even when they have effected what they intended ; their

works are no better than the Spider's Web, good for nothing but to catch Flies. Besides, they often die in the midst of their Works; the many happy genial Days which they promise to themselves prove fatal to them, and that which they design'd to be their Palace, becomes their Sepulchre. Thus we spend our years in musing like the Spider; We propose to our selves great and mighty Things, but fail in the Performance; even what we do, had for the most part, better not have been done: And as for those things for which we contend with so much vehemence, but are not able to attain them, they are of a short and uncertain date, neither they nor we can continue for ever. Thus the covenant with Death is disannull'd, and the agreement with Hell shall not stand. We consume and wast away and perish, and what is yet more Melancholy, we blindly rush headlong into Eternity, from whence there is no Redemption.

Isaiah 28.
18.

Gen. 5 5.

ver. 8.

ver. 11.

ver. 27.

'Tis reported of *Guericus*, that as he was hearing one Day at Church the Fifth Chapter of *Genesis*, wherein are these Words; *And all the days that Adam lived, were nine hundred and thirty years and he died. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. And all the days of Enos, were nine hundred and five years, and he died. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty nine years, and he died, &c.* The apprehensions of Death wrought so powerfully upon him, and made so strong an impression upon his Mind, that he immediately retir'd from the World, and dedicated himself to the Service of God, that he might die the Death of the Righteous, and stand possess'd

sefs'd of that blessed Eternity, which is no where to be found on Earth.

CHAP. II.

What is the best Question.

ST. Matthew, Chap. 19. gives us an account of a Young Man who came to Christ and ask'd him a Question; and in St. Mark we have the particulars of his Carriage and Address; Mar. 19. 16. *There came one running, saith the Evangelist, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, What shall I do that I may inherit eternal Life?* Mark 10. 17. To whom our Saviour made this reply, *Thou knowest the Commandments; if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.* Mar. 19. 17. At Philippi a City of Macedonia the keeper of the Prison fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Acts 16. 29. *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* 30. This was an excellent Question indeed, and the best that cou'd be ask'd; but O good God! Where are the Men that move this Question? Among all our Enquiries, this is very seldom or never to be heard. It is common with Men by their foolish Questions, to betray their Weakness and Curiosity, and to discover to others those imperfections which they wou'd willingly have conceal'd. If any one is solicitous to know, where the best Wine is to be sold, I can easily divine his Inclinations. If another asks such immodest Questions as I cannot hear and not be asham'd; he lays open to my view the secrets of his Heart,

and

and manifestly discovers it to be full of those things with which his Discourse so much abounds. We do nothing else but propose Questions to one another; but we never enquire, which is the way that leads to Heaven? This is the fault of all vicious Men, but particularly of those who give themselves up to Luxury and Intemperance, who mind nothing else, but how to gratifie their sensual Inclinations, and take their fill of unlawful Satisfaction; This, I say, is their Misfortune, that tho' they have plung'd themselves into the deep, and are just upon the point of perishing in it, yet they seldom or never, with that seriousness and sincerity as becomes so weighty and important a matter, say thus unto themselves; Is this the way to Eternal Felicity? Is this the way that leads to Heaven? But of all others, they are least apt to move this Question, who enjoy a sweet and delicious Life, who have nothing to trouble and discompose them, or if they have, endeavour all they can to make themselves insensible of it. They look upon Afflictions to be the greatest of Evils, and are so intent upon their Pleasures, that as long as all things are well with them, they regard not the Miseries and Calamities of others, and never concern themselves in the least with what shall be hereafter. This is their daily and constant Song: *The Heavens, even the Heavens are the Lords; but the earth hath he given to the children of Men.* They want neither strength of Body nor Mind, by which they may escape the power of Men, but the Hands of the Lord are Mighty, they will bring them to Judgment, and compel them to suffer everlasting Punishment for

upon Eternity.

for all their wicked and ungodly Actions. God may sometimes in his secret Judgment reject a Sinner, he may take away his Presence from him, and give him over to follow his own Imaginations, *and to walk in the way of his Heart,* Eccle. 11. 9. *and in the sight of his Eyes.* He may suffer him to enjoy a Scene of Prosperity, and to lead an easie and happy Life, that if at any time he does any thing that is good, he may immediately receive his Reward: God, I say, may suffer all this, in his secret Judgment he may spare him here, to punish him hereafter. The Royal Psalmist speaking of these seeming happy Men, gives this Character of them; *They are not in trouble as other Men; neither are they plagued like other Men.* They go a whoring with *their own inventions.* This certainly is the most deplorable condition of Life as can possibly be imagin'd. God spares not those whom he designs to prepare for Eternity, but *causes them often to feel his Rod.* I cou'd confirm this Truth by many Examples, but at present I choose to mention but one, which indeed is so particular and extraordinary in all its Circumstances, that I know nothing in all the History to past Ages, that is pallel to it.

C H A P. III.

How God punishes here, that he may spare hereafter.

IN the Year of our Lord 1185, *Andronicus* the First Emperour of the East, being taken Prisoner by his own Subjects in the third Year of his Reign, was very cruelly and barbarously us'd by them; they put two Iron Chains about his Neck, loaded him with Fetters, and in this manner they carried him before *Isacius Angelus*, who was chosen Emperor in his stead. Who having first reproach'd him for his Tyranny and Cruelties, deliver'd him over to the enraged Multitude to do with him as they pleas'd. Nothing cou'd be more pleasing to the People than to have it in their Power to revenge themselves upon their Enemy, and indeed their Revenge was very extraordinary; They buffetted him, bastinadoed him, pull'd him by the Beard, tore his Hair from his Head, dash'd out his Teeth; this done, they drag'd him into the Publick Market, and expos'd him to the Mockeries of all the Citizens: Nay, even the very Women fell upon him and beat him with their Fists. After this they cut off his Right Hand, and thrust him thus maim'd into the common Dungeon of Thieves and Robbers, without Meat, Drink, or any one to look after him. In a few days they put out one of his Eyes, and being thus miserably mangled, having not only lost an Eye but an Arm, they put upon him a little short Cloak, shav'd his Head,
and

and set him upon a scabbed Camel with his Face towards the Tail; then they put on his Head a Crown of Garlick, and forc'd him to hold the Camels Tail instead of a Scepter. In this manner they lead him in Triumph thro' the Market-place, observing a slow Majestick pace; here he was again insulted by the furious Rabble, who never consider'd that but three Days since, he was a Great and Mighty Emperor, prais'd, admir'd and celebrated by the People, and that they themselves had taken the Oath of Allegiance to be his true and faithful Subjects. Their Rage immediately supply'd them with Arms; Stones and Brands are flung at him in abundance; some beat him on the Head with Clubs; others fill'd his Nostrils with Dirt; others dipt Spunges in Excrements and squeez'd them upon his Face; some run him into the sides with Spits, others call'd him mad Dog, Fool and Blockhead: An impudent Woman coming out of a Kitchen with a Pot of scalding Water, pour'd it on his Head as he pass'd by. There was none who did not do him some injury or other. At length they brought him into the Theatre, where they mock'd and flouted him as they pleas'd; then they took him from the Camel and hung him up by the Heels betwixt two Pillars. The unhappy Emperour endur'd these Indignities with an invincible Patience; He discover'd nothing that was mean and unmanly, but behav'd himself in all respects like a truly pious and Christian Heroe: He never was heard to accuse his ill Fortune, or to lament and complain in the least; if he had, it had been to no purpose: When he began to make his accounts
with

The Fifth Consideration

with God, and to beg pardon for his Sins. He was observ'd, now and then, to repeat this Expression, *Domine miserere, Domine miserere, Lord have Mercy, Lord have Mercy.*

Unhappy *Andronicus*, in that thou wast forc'd to undergo such inhumane Barbarities; but happy in this, in that you suffer'd them with a Patience invincible, as the just reward and recompence of Sin.

But the Rage of the Multitude did not stop here; they were resolv'd to torment him as long as he liv'd; they took off his Coat, and tore his Flesh with Hooks and Harping-Irons: One more cruel than the rest, run his Sword into his Belly, and pierc'd his Bowels as he was hanging; Two others, to try whose Sword was the sharpest, run him into the Back, leaning with all their strength upon their Swords as they thrust them into him. Here the miserable Emperor, with much pain and difficulty, lifted up his wounded Hand to his Mouth, with design, as some thought, to remove the warm Blood which sprang into it from his Wounds in doing which his Life went from him. After some Days he was taken down from the Gallows, and thrown like a Beast under one of the Arches of the Theatre; some who had more Humanity in them, remov'd his Body to another Place, but *Isacius* wou'd not suffer him to be buried.

O *Andronicus*! O Emperor of the *East*! How ought you to adore the Goodness of God, for this his extraordinary Grace and Mercy, in permitting you to suffer these Indignities for a few Days, that you might not perish Days without number: You were Miserable for a short

short time here on Earth, that you might be Happy for ever and ever: And I do not at all doubt, but that you thought upon the Years of *Eternity*, seeing that you endur'd this Scene of Torment with such an exalted bravery of Spirit as was not to be daunted by the greatest Extremities.

I have taken this Relation from the Annals of *Nicetas*, surnam'd *Cheniates*, who liv'd, at the time, when these things were transacted.

O Christians, Christians, think upon *Eternity*! in all the Miseries and Extremities of Life, let the Thoughts of *Eternity* be your Consolation; it will wonderfully sweeten the Rigour of your Pains, and make them seem light and short unto you, short indeed, if compar'd with *Eternity*. For our light affliction which is but for a ² Cor. 4. moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and ^{17.} eternal weight of Glory. Upon this St. *Augustin* cries out, and prays, *Domine hic ure, hic secamodo in eternum parcas*, Burn me here, O Lord; Let me suffer here, so thou sparest me hereafter. Thus this Pious Man continu'd to pray even to the very moment of his Departure. This is certain, that God seldom spares those in this Life, whom he designs to make Happy for ever.

THE SIXTH
CONSIDERATION
UPON
ETERNITY.

CONSIDERATION VI.

How the Holy Scriptures in many places inculcate upon our Minds the Contemplation of Eternity.

Psal. 12. 8.

THE Royal Prophet, speaking of the Wicked, has these Words; *The ungodly walk on every side, or in a circuit.* This is their way and manner of Life; They go from Feast to Feast, from Pleasure to Pleasure, from one Wickedness to another: This is their Circle; when they have gone their round of Wickedness, they begin again, and proceed as before; 'till Death unawares surprises them in their Circuit, when they least expected him.

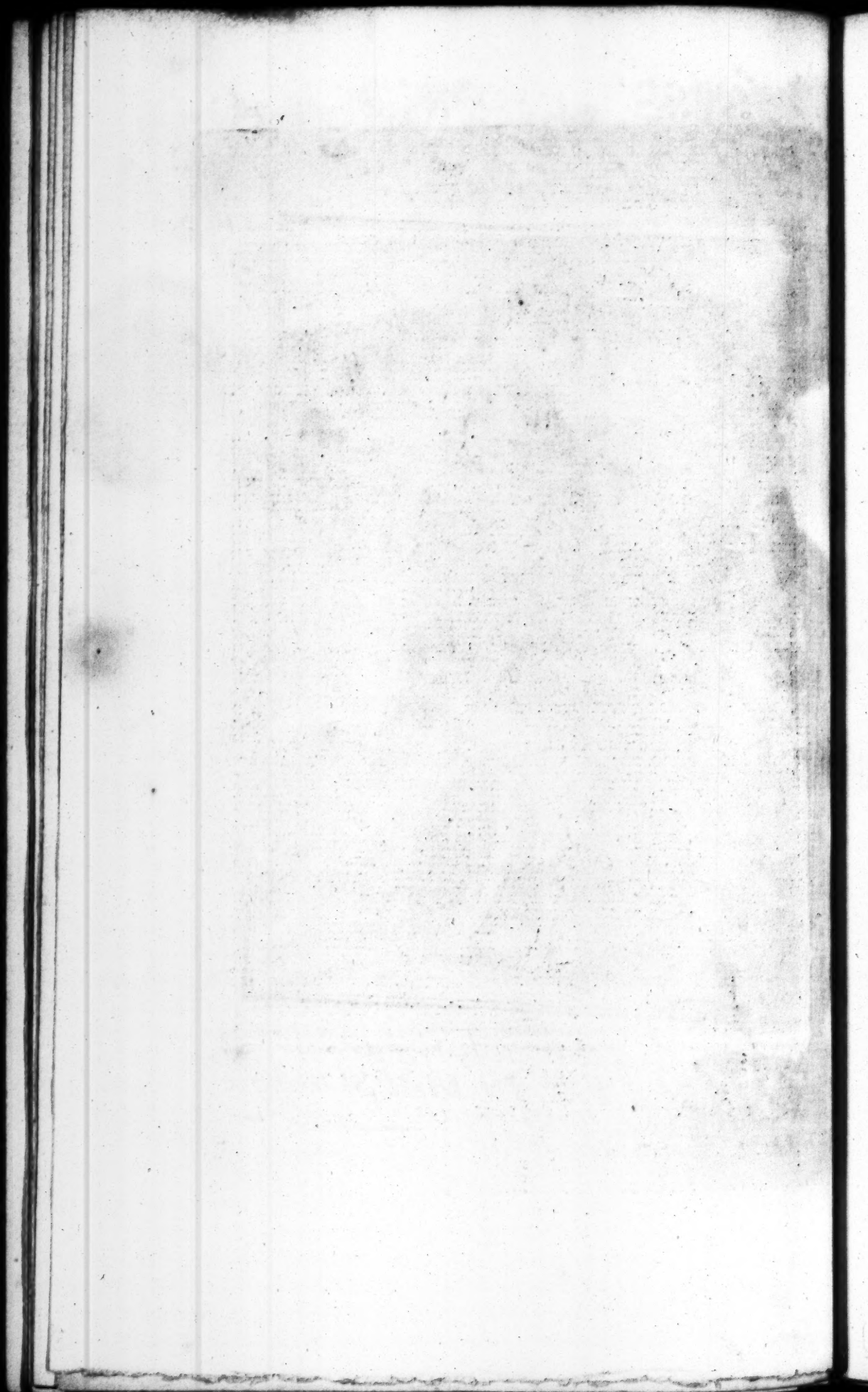
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Fig. 6.

2. Cor. Ch. 5. v. 1.



We have a building of God a
House not made with hands,—
eternal in the Heavens. —



The Sons of *Job* agreed together to Feast and *Job* 1. 3.
 Regale each other by turns, every One his Day ;
 their good Old Father wisely considered, that
 these their daily Entertainments cou'd not but
 be sinful ; upon which, *He sent and sanctifi-* Ver. 5.
ed them, and rose up early in the Morning, and of-
fer'd Burnt-offerings, according to the Number of
them all. And therefore, as the Wicked delight
 to waste and consume their Days in a Circle of
 Pleasure, God will appoint them a Circle, but
 it shall be a Circle of Torments, which will never
 have an End. This was foretold by Holy
David, Thine Arrows, says the Prophet, *went* Psalm 37.
abroad ; the Voice of thy Thunder was heard in 17, 18.
the Heaven, or round about. Famine, War, Pe-
 stilence, Diseases, Calamities, Death, and all
 other Afflictions, under which we often languish
 in this Life, are the Arrows of the Lord, but
 they soon fly over us, they swiftly pass from
 one to another ; but the Voice of his Thunder,
 the Voice of his Anger, and heavy Displeasure,
 like a Wheel that is always in Motion, shall
 found round about the Infernal Regions, from
 Everlasting to Everlasting.

This Wheel, as if it were fill'd with Gun-
 powder, when once it takes Fire shall burn to
 all Eternity ; *A Fire is kindled in mine Anger,* Deut. 32.
and shall burn unto the lowest Hell. But there is 22.
 another Circle which is likewise Eternal, I
 mean, a constant perpetual Change from Cold
 to Heat, and from Heat to Cold which are al-
 ways in Extremes. *Drought and Heat consume* Job 24 19.
the Snow-waters, and so doth the Grave those that
have sinn'd. This is more expressly intimated to
 H us,

Matt. 12.
13.

us, by the gnashing of Teeth, and Weeping of Eyes which are mention'd by St. *Matthew*. The better to describe this dreadful and incomprehensible Wheel of *Eternity*, we will first show how the Holy Fathers agree with the Church, and then, how the Church agrees with the Scriptures in this Particular. In these there are divers excellent Admonitions, to which if we give good heed, *Eternity* will not easily be forgotten.

C H A P. I.

The Answers of the Holy Fathers, and the Church, to several Questions respecting Eternity.

OF all the Holy Fathers, there are Five, who liv'd in different Ages, that particularly deserve our Esteem and Veneration; *Augustin, Chrysostom, Gregory, Bernard, Laurentius Justiniani.*

The First Question here is; Whether it be easier and more tolerable to endure the Head-ach, Tooth-ach, Gout, Stone, Colick, or any other acute Distemper for three whole Days and Nights without Intermission, and not to have a Moments Rest all that long Time, or to
eat

eat a mouthful of Fish, whose Gall was overflowed? This may seem a very idle and foolish Question; for how much better wou'd it be, to eat a whole Fish tho' never so bitter, than endure such exquisite torturing Pains, tho' but for one Day. The bitterness of the Fish will do you no Injury, it will neither endanger your Life, nor bring upon you any Distemper; it may seem indeed unpleasant to the Taste, but what is that? The Answer is very just and proper; and yet how many Thousand Men make choice of the former? How often does the Pious Preacher tell them in a very plain and eloquent Manner, O Christians, Christians! The Way which you go will Ruine you for ever; our Blessed Saviour both by his Life and Doctrine, has shewn us a safer and much better Way, ye have wander'd long enough, Return, O Return, *and bring forth Works meet for Repentance.* The good God has put it into every Man's Power to go to Heaven, if he will. He is always ready to give his Assistance to those that desire it; the Duties of Abstinence and Mortification are I confess very bitter and painful; to live a chaste and innocent Life, to keep a constant Guard over our Senses, and to conquer our Passions, is no such small and easie Task as some may imagine; but how grievous and difficult soever it Luke 14. be, we must endure it. *Ought not Christ to 26. have suffer'd these Things, and to enter into his Glory.* Let not that Labour which is but for a Season, make us afraid; it is necessary that, for a few Years, or perhaps a few Days, we act and suffer valiantly, but our Joy and Tranquillity will be *Eternal*. He is the greatest Conquerour who conquers himself, who bridles his Appetites,

John 21.
12.

petites, and opposes with Violence his impetuous Passions, and all for the sake of Heaven and Christ, and a Blessed *Eternity*. Our Saviour Christ after his Resurrection invited his Disciples to dine upon some Fish, which were broil'd upon the Coals; by which Action He signified to them, what great Things they were to suffer, That they shou'd not think of leading a sweet and pleasant Life, but that they shou'd be Ston'd, Scourg'd, Crucified and Flea'd alive, and that this was the only Way to a joyful Resurrection; That the Things which we see are meer Trifles, Things of no Value, and consequently not to be compar'd with that Immortal Felicity which is invisible. These Things are often Preach'd, and Press'd, and Urg'd upon the Minds of Men, but they are little regarded: This bitter Fish by which I understand the Duties of Abstinence and Mortification, is recommended to us both from the Press and Pulpit, but we set it at nought; we hear and read many Discourses upon *Eternity*, but we will not dispose ourselves to believe them; if at any Time they make a more than ordinary Impression on our Minds, the Cares of the World soon Efface it, and we bury it in Oblivion. Even when Conscience acts the Preacher, and forces, as it were, upon us some excellent Admonitions, and is instant with us to put them in Practice, it prevails nothing, all its Perswasions are in vain. There are many of such perverse Dispositions, that they will not listen to the Voice of the Preacher, nor to the Dictates of Conscience be they never so pressing; on the contrary, they will debate the Matter with you, and in Opposition to what you

you Assert, they will confidently Reply, *Let all Things go well with us here, and we are satisfied; who can tell what shall be hereafter? Future Things are precarious and uncertain; no Man was ever known to come back from the Kingdom of Darkness; let us therefore mind our present Profit, and enjoy as much of Life as we can, and please ourselves with all that is sweet.* These are the Principles which the Men of the World prescribe to themselves, but let St. *Augustin* determine this Question: *Melius est, inquit, modica amaritudo in faucibus, quam aeternum tormentum in visceribus.* 'Tis better, says He, to suffer a little bitterness in the Mouth, than to be tormented in the Bowels for ever. It is infinitely better to suffer for our Sins in this Life, than in that which is to come: It is infinitely better to keep our Bodies under, and to accustom ourselves to the necessary Duties of Abstinence and Mortification, for Sixty or Seventy Years together, than to suffer for one Day the Torments of the Damn'd, whose Anguish and Misery is beyond Expression. But let us see what another of the Fathers has to say upon this Subject.

The Second Question is propos'd by St. *Chrysostom*; Shou'd a Man, one Night in a Hundred Years, enjoy a sweet and pleasant Dream, and be afterwards punish'd a Hundred Years for it, wou'd he wish to enjoy his Dream again? What Proportion has a Dream to a 100 Years? The same and less has this short Life to that which is to come; as a Drop is to the Ocean, so are a Thousand Years to *Eternity*. In another Place he has these Words: Is there any Thing that can be compar'd with *Eternity*? What are Ten

*Hom. 22.
ad Populum.*

*Him. 23.
in Epist. ad
Hebræos.*

*Luke 16.
24, 25.*

Thousand Years to infinite Ages? They are not so much as the least Drop of Water to the vast Abyfs. When once this Life is past and gone, the State which succeeds is fix'd and unchangeable; do not expect to see an End of it; after Death there is no Repentance, our Tears will then be unserviceable to us, and all our Sighs will be in Vain. Tho' a Man shou'd gnash his Teeth in Hell, or put out his fiery burning Tongue, yet *no one will dip the tip of his Finger in Water*, no cooling Drop must be expected; he shall receive the same Answer which *Abraham* once made to *Dives*, *Son remember, that thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good Things*. But suppose, that a Man shou'd enjoy his Pleasures all the Days of his Life, without any Interruption; what are they to an Eternity of Ages? The Things of this Life, whether Good or Evil, soon expire, but the Punishments of the next, are as immortal as the Soul itself, which will never have an End. Here in this World, if the Body be burnt, the Soul departs from it, but in the other, the Body itself at the Resurrection shall become incorruptible, and the Soul shall burn for ever and ever. The Bodies of Sinners shall, I say, at the Resurrection become incorruptible, but to what Purpose? Not to receive a Crown of Glory, but to suffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire. Thus far *St. Chrysostom*.

St. Gregory is the next, who gives this Solution to the following Question: Whether a Man will sooner be intoxicated with drinking in a Wine-Cellar, than in a Dining-Room? The Spouse of *Christ* thus Triumphs in the Words

Words of Solomon; *He brought me to the Banquetting House*, (or as some read it) *He brought me into his Wine-Cellar, and his Banner over me was Love*. Upon which St. Gregory Discourses thus. What can we more properly conceive by the Wine-Cellar, than the secret Contemplation of *Eternity*? Certain it is, that whosoever seriously thinks upon *Eternity*, and suffers his Thoughts to sink deep into his Mind, and to make a lasting Impression upon him, he may Glory and Triumph with the Spouse of *Christ*, he may rejoice with Her and say, *He hath set his Banner of Love over me*. For he will better order and regulate his Affections, he will love God more, and himself less, and for God's sake, he will shew a regard even to his Enemies. But there is another Advantage in meditating upon *Eternity*, which is this; whoever drinks very freely in this Wine-Cellar becomes intoxicated, but he is intoxicated with Heavenly Desires which conduce very much to the Amendment of Life, which put his Soul as it were, upon the Wing to his Heavenly Country, where he shall flow in Pleasures Everlasting. *These Men are full of New Wine*, said the Multitude deriding the Apostles; and the Reproach was just, they were full of New Wine, but it was from this Wine-Cellar. Tho' St. Gregory has many thoughts upon *Eternity*, which are passionately moving; yet he never express'd himself more to the Purpose than in this one Sentence, which for its Truth and Brevity is equally to be admir'd; *That which pleases is but for a Moment, that which Torments is for ever and ever*. Here a Man might wish with Job, *Oh that these Words were now written!* *Oh that*

Cant. 2. 3.

AAs 2. 13.

Joh 19.

23, 24.

they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen! These Words I say, *That which pleases is but for a Moment, but that which Torments is for ever and ever.* The Book in which I wou'd have them written is the Heart of Man; I wou'd have no other Pen, but a serious Meditation; nor other Ink, but the Blood of *Christ*. And these Words thus deeply engraven in the Heart, ought at such Times more especially to be often call'd to Mind, and frequently repeated, when the Charms of Pleasure prevail upon our Reason, when Lust entices, and Luxury invites; when the Flesh rebels, and the Spirit grows faint; when we have either an Opportunity to Sin, which is a great Temptation, or are in Danger of doing any Thing, which the Laws of God forbid to be done.

The Fourth is *St. Bernard*, who thus Answers the Question which is now to be propos'd. Such is the Condition of Humane Nature, that the Calamities which attend Mankind are as different as their Faces; some are so grievously and continually afflicted, that they are ready to sink down, and sigh out their Souls under the load of incumbent Evils; some again are oppress'd with Poverty, others with Diseases; some are incumber'd with Debts, others are rack'd with gnawing Cares, and some are so distracted with Injuries and Slanders, that being of a timorous and impatient Disposition, they often hang or drown themselves to put an end to their Misery; but that which they suppos'd wou'd determine their Misery, is really and truly the beginning of Sorrows, and 'tis
such

such a beginning, as will never have an end. On the contrary, the Good and Vertuous are always willing, always ready to submit themselves to God's Disposal; they neither desire to die soon, nor to live long; If it is God's good Pleasure that they shou'd die, they are contented. Has He doom'd them to a speedy sudden Death, They are all Submission. Will He have 'em live long? They make no Resistance, They have made so perfect a Resignation of themselves, that what He wills not, neither will they, God's Will and theirs are entirely the same. There are a Third Sort of Men, which is much the greatest, who covet to live long; infomuch, that there is hardly one among them, tho' never so Old, who does not hope to live a Year longer; these Men are never satiated with Life, tho' Death be never so long in coming, yet to them he comes too soon. Now the Question is, who of these Three Sorts of Men may be said to live the longest. St. Bernard in his Sermon upon this Divine Promise, *With long Life will I satisfy Him*, crys out in Admiration; What is so long as *Eternity*? What is so long as that which will have no End? Life Eternal is the good End which we are all to aim at, a good End indeed which has no End. Then He adds; true is that Day which has no Night; *Eternal Truth*, True *Eternity*, and therefore True and *Eternal Society*. They then can only be said to Live long, who shall never Die, but live always in Heaven; and they only can be said to be long in dying, who shall always be dying; who shall never live in Hell, tho' they always live in it.

Psalms 91.
16.

The

Lib. de O.
bedi. Ch.
26.

The Last Question is resolv'd by *Laurentius Justinianus*: There are many Things, says He, in the World, which Nature has appropriated to one particular Place, so that they are not to be found any-where else, unless it be in Part. There are many Flowers and Animals in the new-discover'd World, which cannot be brought over to us; we can have nothing but the Seed of the one, and the Skins of the other. *Eternity* belongs to the other World, and all that we can here have of it, is the Seed; and what are the Seeds of *Eternity*? They are, saith *Laurentius*, *Contempt of one's self, the Gift of Charity, and the Taste of Christ's Works*. To Contemn others is a Tree that covers the Face of the Earth; it is of a large and prodigious Extent, it spreads its Branches throughout the Universe, which serve to supply Hell-Fire with Fewel; but the Contempt of one's self, is so small a Seed, that it is hardly known in the World: Our *Saviour Christ*, when He came from Heaven brought it along with Him, *Who*
 Phil. 2. 7, *made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him*
 8. *the Form of a Servant, and became obedient, not only to the Stable, or the Manger; but even to Mount Calvary, to the Cross, Death, and Hell: Wherefore God also hath exalted Him; but now this little unknown Seed, has vastly spread and extended itself, it is now become the highest of the Trees. The same Father speaking of Charity, has these Words. According to the Measure of our Charity, says*
 Luke 7. *Laurentius, such will be our Reward at the*
 47. *Day of Retribution; for to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. The Grace which*
 we

we obtain is in Proportion to our Charity, where there is less Grace, there will our Crown of Glory be less; so that nothing is more true, than that the more we love God, the greater will be our Eternal Recompence in the Kingdom of his Glory. The whole Law is Love, but this Love must be Pure, Chaste, and Divine. *The Taste of Christ's Works* is next to be consider'd. 'Tis a common saying among those who Study *Rhetorick*, that they are allow'd to have made a considerable Progress in that Art, who have a true Taste of *Tully's Works*: In like manner we affirm, that they have made a great Progress in Vertue, who relish the Precepts of our Saviour Christ. Whosoever considers our Saviour's Doctrine, and reads over the History of his Life and Death, and at the same Time finds in himself no relish for them; if he is not affected, delighted, and transported with those Things which tend to the Improvement of his Mind, to the increase of Piety, which have Relation to Heaven and Eternal Felicity, but on the contrary takes more Pleasure in Eating, Drinking, Laughing, Jestling, and other idle Diversions; he may with Sorrow safely say, *O my God, how little Seed of Eternity have I in me, my God, my God, I have none at all.* Whenever I look into the foldings of my Heart; when I turn my Eyes inward and descend into my Breast; I manifestly discover the bent of my Affections, I see what Spirit is within me; alas my Delight is in Drinking and Feasting, in Dancing and Gaming, in Hearing Idle Foolish Tales, and in Reading bad Books; I can listen with Pleasure to an amorous Song, and love to conform myself to others, and to imitate them
in

in all Things. But to hear of Christ, and of all that He did and suffer'd for us; to hear of the Watchings and Fastings of the Saints, how they spent all their Life in Reading and Praying, is extremely painful and irksome to me. What more tedious than to hear a Sermon of an Hour long! That Hour seems to me much longer than others, and therefore I either fall asleep, or divert myself with some Idle Conversation. Of such a Man we may safely pass Sentence, that he has no *Taste of the Works of Christ*. But let us now hear, what is the Sense and Judgment of the Church concerning *Eternity*.

The remembrance of *Eternity* is so much valu'd and esteem'd by the Church; that every Psalm, Hymn and Prayer concludes with *Eternity*. *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, World without end. Amen. As it was in the beginning*, that is, from all Eternity, before the World was, or before that Things began to be; *is now and ever shall be World without end*, that is, throughout all infinite, innumerable, incomprehensible Ages, even to all *Eternity*. But let us leave the small Streams and proceed to the Fountain.

CHAP. II.

Several clear and evident Testimonies of the Holy Scripture, concerning Eternity.

I Shall produce but Three Witnesses, A Prophet, an Apostle, and an Evangelist.

How many are the Sighs, which we daily hear of poor distressed abject Men? One or other is every-where complaining; Oh miserable Me, such is my poor unhappy Condition, that I have few or no Friends; I am neglected, slighted, and contemn'd; every one that sees me insults my Poverty, and almost tramples me under his Feet. Have Patience, O Man! Have a little Patience and bear a while; some happy, joyful, pleasant Days, are yet behind, which shall arise and smile upon Thee; remember the Promise which God himself pronounces by his Servant *Baruch*: *Cast about Thee a double Garment of the Righteousness which cometh from God; and set a Diadem on thine Head of the Glory of the Everlasting.* Baruch 5. 2.

There are others who accuse Nature, and complain, that the Life which is given to Crows and Rooks is of a long Duration, but that the Days

- Days of Man's appointed Time are much too short. Hear me, O ye Complainers hear me! When this short Life is past and gone, there remains another which will last for ever: St. Paul is my Witness, that what I say is true;
- 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We know, saith the Apostle, That if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolv'd, we have a building of God, a House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens. What Matter is it then, if this our little House of Clay falls into ruine, when so stately a Mansion is provided for us, a Mansion that will never perish or decay? To the Testimonies of the Prophet and the Apostle, let me now join that of the Evangelist St. Matthew, by whose Mouth our Saviour himself speaks after this manner: If thy Hand or thy*
- Mat. 18. 8, 9. *Foot offend Thee, cut them off, and cast them from Thee; it is better for thee to enter into Life halt or maim'd, rather than having Two Hands or Two Feet to be cast into Everlasting Fire. And if thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into Life with one Eye, rather than having Two Eyes to be cast into Hell-Fire. O Fire! O Hell! O Eternity! What is the loss of Time to the loss of Eternity? Can it properly be said to be a Loss, when we lay it out to such excellent Advantage, when thereby we gain Eternity? This is the Sense of our Saviour's Promise, which He both made and seal'd to Mankind in these very Words, as they stand recorded by the Evangelist St. Matthew: Every*
- Mat. 19. 29. *one that hath forsaken Houses or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Names sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit Everlasting Life. Is not this Promise of a Blessed Eternity sufficient-*
ly

ly evident, when even in this Life a hundred-fold Reward is given us for Security? Add to this, that our Saviour speaking of the last Judgment, makes a particular Mention of Eternity in three several Places; His Words are these, *Everlasting Fire, Everlasting Punishment, and Life* Mat 25. 41, 46.
Eternal.

Since therefore the Fathers, the Church and Holy Scripture do in so many various and different ways recommend *Eternity* to our serious Consideration; it is our Part and Duty, if we desire to be Happy for ever in Heaven, to meditate with ourselves in this, or the like Manner. O my God, I draw nearer and nearer every Hour to Eternity, and yet how seldom, have I thought upon it? Grant me, I beseech Thee, the Assistance of thy Grace, that for the Time to come, I may meditate upon it both Day and Night; If my Goods encrease according to my wishes; If I enjoy a constant Prosperity; If all things seem to smile upon me, and are, as it were, at my Command, let me not set my Heart upon them; let me presently consider that they are but for a Season; in the midst of my abundance, I will say unto myself, will this Serenity of Weather always last? Will these bright Suns, whose chearful Influence Inspire my Heart with Joy and Gladness, always shine upon me? Suppose I shou'd enjoy all that my Heart cou'd ask or wish for, what service will it do me after I am dead? When this sweet, but short and scanty Felicity, when this grateful but dangerous Scene of Prosperity shall be past and gone, then will follow *Eternity*. But if my Life be full of Sorrow, if
 I

I meet with nothing but Crosses and Disappointments; if Troubles and Afflictions and Calamities without number pour down like a Storm of Hail upon me, I will still support and sustain myself with such Thoughts as these: Let the World take it's Course, let Nature have it's Way, God has ordain'd it, and I am Content. Let the Tempests bellow through the boundless Ocean, let the roaring Billows rage and swell, and dash each other, let the Winds of Affliction blow furiously, and the Waters of Trouble run over my Head, let Clouds of Temptations threaten Ruin and Destruction, let the darkness of Grief and Sorrow surround me, let the shatter'd World shake and tremble, let it fall from its Foundations, it shall not touch my Soul with fear. The Tempests will blow over, and the ruffled Skies will grow clear again, the boisterous Sea will smooth its Face, and the bold Winds will be calm and still; the Storms will quickly spend their Rage, and the rattling Hail will soon be gone. This therefore shall be my constant Consolation, that whatsoever I suffer here will presently expire, it must not, cannot last for ever. Let my Sufferings be as great as can possibly be imagin'd, Death will give me a Deliverance. But, To be condemn'd to Eternal Flames, not Storms nor Tempests are half so dreadful; this is a long long Punishment indeed; all other Things, which are not within the Compass of Eternity are very short and swift as a Moment; they are as a Shadow, and as a Dream; saith St. Chrysostom; they are but *Modicums*, *Things of nothing, for a little while, yea a very little while.* Our Saviour in his Discourses with his Disciples, does often mind them of this
little

little while; He call his own cruel and unequal'd Sufferings but a *little*; even his most bitter Death upon the Cross He calls a *little*; the Labours and Fatigues, the tormenting Pains and violent Deaths which his Disciples were to undergo are with Him a *little*. What then is the Conclusion? I will think as my Blessed Saviour did: Be my Sufferings never so grievous and painful, tho' I endure them a hundred Years; yet still, even still, I will think them but a *little*; for yet a *little while*, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. I will therefore suffer all Things with a Christian Patience, and one Thing will I account necessary, which is, to do nothing against my Conscience, nothing contrary to the Will of God. All Things are safe and secure to Him, who is secure of a Blessed Eternity.

CHAP. III.

All the Things of this Life are but as a Modicum, a very little in respect of Eternity.

Nothing is more true, than that all the Labours, and Sorrows, and severe Fatigues which we undergo in this present Life are for a very little while. This
 I little

little while, as St. Augustin observes, seems long unto us, because we sigh and languish under it; but when it is past, then we presently become sensible, that it was indeed a very little while. The wisest of Men describing the Period of Humane Life, even when it extended to a Hundred Years, which but seldom happens, made choice of the minutest Things in Nature to represent it to us by way of Comparison. *The Number of Man's Days at the most are a Hundred Years; as a drop of Water unto the Sea, and a Gravel-stone in Comparison of the Sand, so are a Thousand Years to the Days of Eternity.* Tell me, O ye Ancients! Ye whose Lives are lengthened to a Hundred Years, what Occasion is there for rejoicing? Alas! What are all our Years? A Gravel-stone and a Sea-drop, and what is this Gravel-stone to a Mountain of Gravel? What is this Sea-drop to the boundless Ocean? Such are Fifty, Sixty or a Hundred Years; Hear me, O ye Ancients, hear me! They are but a *Modicum*, they are even as nothing to the Days of *Eternity*. And yet, wretched and miserable Men that we are, how do we rejoice in this Drop and Gravel-stone? Our Life is indeed a little Stone, but it is no Jewel, no precious Stone, 'tis nothing but Sand. Our Life is a little drop of Water, but it is not a drop of sweet Water but bitter. *All the Days of Man are Sorrows*, says the Preacher, and his Travel grief; yea his Heart taketh not rest in the Night. Recollect, saith St. Augustin, all the Years from Adam even to this Time, run over the Scripture, it was almost but Yesterday that our First Parent eat the forbidden Fruit, and was turn'd out of Paradise. What is become of the Years

Ecclef. 18.
9, 10.

Ecclef. 2.
23.

Years that are past? Had you liv'd all the Time from the Banishment of *Adam* down to this Day, you would then Confess, that that Life was not over-long which so soon is ended: What then is the Life of one single Man? Add what number of Years you please, suppose him to arrive to an extream Old-age, and what is it then? 'Tis when you have done all, but as the blast of the Morning. Assure your self, that what I say is most true. Tell me, I beseech you, where now is *Adam*? What is become of *Cain*? Where is the aged long-liv'd *Methuselah*? Where is *Noah*, *Sem*, and *Heber*? Where is the faithful and obedient *Abraham*? What is become of *Jacob* and *Joseph*? They are dead and gone. *Fuerunt Troes*, They were alive, but now they are no more. This is the Condition of our Mortal Nature; thus the Glory of the World, and the Life of Man pass away. O Morning Dew! O Vanity of Vanities! What is it that we are here so fond of? What is that mighty length of Years, which we hope and wish for with so much Passion? Alas it is a very little; look round the World, whatever you behold is but a little Minute, a contemptible Point, which is next to nothing. So true is that saying of *Gregory the Great*, *All the length of this present Life is known to be a Point, when once it is concluded. In a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye*, all Things shall have an end. *I have seen an end of all Perfection, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* Why then do we say that any Time is long? The Time that is past is not now, that which is Future is yet to come, and what is the Present? The Glass is

1 Cor. 15.

52.

Psalm 119.

96.

always running, and the flying Hour is ever on its way; that which is flown is Past, and that which remains is yet to come; where then is that Time which we call long? St. *Bernard* very often inculcates upon his Hearers (nor can I forbear to recommend it) that most true and excellent saying of St. *Hierome*, *No Labour ought to seem hard unto us, no Time long, in which we endeavour to possess ourselves of a glorious Immortality.*

But how short soever our Life may be with respect to Eternity, yet none of the Damn'd can justly accuse God for not giving them a longer space of Time; they must blame themselves for not Living better, *for there is no Inquisition in the Grave*, saith the Son of *Sirach*, *Whether thou hast liv'd Ten, or a Hundred, or a Thousand Tears.* Their Lives were long enough, had they but been Holy.

Ecc'us. 41.
4.

But, Christian Reader, let me argue this Matter a little more boldly and plainly, let me lay it open to your View, and expose it naked to the Eyes of your Understanding: You say, that you often think on Heaven, that your Soul is always upon the Wing to Eternity; this you say indeed, but I must deny it: Shou'd I affirm any such Thing of myself, I wou'd desire you not to believe me. For how can it possibly be, that you and I shou'd so often, and so attentively think upon Heaven, and the Joys of that Place, as we say we do? How can it be that our Souls shou'd be always on the wing to *Eternity* as we pretend they are, when we find

find ourselves so cold and indifferent in the Duties of Religion, so slow and backward to every Thing that is good, so prone and forward to every Thing that is evil, so very yielding and complying with every Thing, that tends to gratifie our sensual Inclinations? We are careless, negligent, complaining Creatures; and when we shou'd be angry, then we are too patient; and when we shou'd be patient, then our Hearts sink down with us. How are we dejected under every little ordinary Calamity? We dread the Wrath and Displeasure of Man, and yet how furious and impatient are we, when Things run cross, and do not fall out according to our wishes? I might here say something of Lust and Envy, those restless and uneasy Passions of the Soul, which inflame our Hearts, and consume our Spirits; but I choose rather to pass them by. And yet notwithstanding all these Defects, We Good, Pious, Holy Men (as we fancy ourselves,) who are always most timorous when we shou'd be bold, and never more Vallant than when we shou'd be fearful, Exult and Triumph and make it our boast, that we often think and meditate upon *Eternity*, and that this is the end of all our wishes. Believe me, if you please, I must plainly and sincerely declare my Sentiments; it is I say incredible, that Heaven and *Eternity* shou'd be so much in our Thoughts, and yet in the mean-while our Lives continue unreform'd. Did I say incredible, I will say it is impossible, and thus I presume to make good my Assertion.

Gen. 29.
20.

The Patriarch *Jacob* serv'd his Uncle *Laban* Seven Years for his Daughter *Rachel*, and they seem'd unto him but a few Days, for the Love he had to her. Hearest thou this, O thou Complainer! Thou servest no Impostor such as *Laban* was, but God thy Creator, who keepeth his Promise for ever; nor dost thou serve Him for a Wife, but for the Kingdom of Heaven; not for her charming lovely Face, but for the Eternal Beatifick Vision of God himself; not for the Pleasure of Her Conversation, but for the ravishing and transporting Joys of a Blessed *Eternity*. And yet how art thou dejected with the Trouble and Fatigue of one short Day? How soon do thy Affections grow cold to God? How soon do they cool to Heaven and Eternity? If the Day of Adversity frowns upon thee, how many and bitter are thy Complaints? You immediately call Heaven and Earth to witness; you breath nothing but Revenge, and in the heighth of your furious Passion you arraign the Justice of God himself. At other Times, when the soft bewitching Charms of Pleasure tempt you to Sin, God and his Service are quickly forgotten; you plunge yourself into a Labyrinth of Voluptuousness, the entrance I grant may seem sweet and inviting, but the end thereof is Ruine and Destruction. Behold and see, This is thy Vigilance! This is thy Heroick Fortitude! This is the Love which thou hadst for God! How can you pretend to serve God Seven Years, when thou canst not hold out even one short Day? O *Simon, Simon*, couldst thou not Watch one Hour with thy Lord and Master.

Master. But I return to my History of the Patriarch.

Jacob, being deceiv'd by *Laban*, who put *Leah* his tender-ey'd Daughter upon him, instead of his amiable and beloved Mistress, consented to serve him another Seven Years for the beauteous *Rachel*; and no doubt, but these other Seven Years seem'd likewise to him a few Days, for the great Love which he had unto her; and 'tis very credible that oftentimes, when he was tir'd with working, he cast his Eyes on her charming Face, and said secretly to himself; Tho' my Seven Years Service is extreamly hard, yet such is her Seraphick Beauty, so fresh and ravishing are her Charms, that for her I cou'd serve even Seven Years more. The greatness of his Passion soften'd his Labours, and made even his Hardships seem pleasant to him.

Dost thou hear this, O thou effeminate Soldier of Christ! And dost thou murmur and complain? Thou art commanded to serve God, for God himself; thou art commanded to labour here, that thou mayst enter into his Rest; thou art exhorted to Patience and Long-suffering, that in God's due time, thou mayst stand possess'd of a Blessed Immortality: And yet dost thou sleep, O Sluggard! Dost thou hear this, and yet complain? Call to remembrance the Years, which thou hast spent in the Service of thy Maker? Hast thou serv'd God Twenty Years together, with that unequall'd, unexampled Fidelity as *Jacob* did *Laban*? Hast
I 4 thou

Gen. 31.
40, 41.

thou serv'd him so many Months, or Days? Compute the Nights which thou has spent in Prayer, cast up the Days which thou hast dedicated to his Worship and Service, and then consider with yourself, whether you can truly and sincerely say to God, as *Jacob* did to his Father-in-law *Laban*; *Night and Day have I served thee, in the Day the Drought consum'd me, and the Frost by Night, and my Sleep departed from mine Eyes; thus have I been Twenty Years in thy House, I serv'd thee Fourteen Years for thy Two Daughters, and Six Years for thy Cattle.* Let us now reason the Matter together, hast thou serv'd God Twenty Years? Thou knowest what shall be thy Future Recompence, how that all thy Labours shall be plentifully Rewarded? Not with the Daughters of *Laban*, not with Flocks of Sheep; no! The good God whom thou serveest shall bless thee with himself, He shall be thy exceeding great Reward. Thou shalt be perfectly and entirely Happy both in Body and Mind; thou shalt enjoy an absolute Content; Joys, Delights and Pleasures Everlasting, shall fill thy Soul with Extracies and Transports, which always satisfe but never Cloy. And yet how strangely backward are thy Hands to that which is good? Behold thy Feet, how unwilling are they to carry Thee to Church? Look into thy Heart, how does it fret and consume with Envy? How does it burn with Anger and Revenge? How does it abound with filthy Thoughts and impure Desires? How is it corrupted with Idleness and Impatience? Is this the Service which thou payest to God? Dost thou hope by this means to Merit Heaven, to inherit

inherit a State of Immortality, and Happiness Everlasting? Certain I am, that this is not the way to secure to thyself this glorious Inheritance; Why dost thou not rather imitate *Jacob*? When thou art faint and weary with Travel, when the Day of Adversity frowns upon thee, and Storms arise, and Clouds grow black and threaten Ruine, or when thy Happy Prosperous State shall begin to lead away thy Reason, and incline thy Heart to give way and yield to some sinful Temptation, then lift up thy Eyes to Heaven, behold and see thy promis'd *Rachel*, and let her Charms be thy Consolation.

Behold thy *Rachel*, she is fair and lovely, without Spot or Blemish; look up to Heaven the Habitation of thy Rest, the Seat of Pleasures Everlasting. Be Content to suffer a little Sorrow, and to endure Afflictions like a faithful Soldier; yet a little while, and thou shalt be in Heaven, where, the greater thy Sufferings were on Earth, the more sweet and ravishing shall be thy Satisfaction; the more painful and grievous thy Life was here, the more grateful and refreshing shall be thy Rest in the Blessed and Peaceful Regions of *Eternity*. Take Courage then, exert a true Christian Fortitude and Patience, and contemn thy Afflictions; *Eternity* is more than a sufficient Compensation, the Reward is infinitely Superiour to all that you can do, and suffer for it. If thou could'st thus encourage thyself, and revive thy faint and drooping Spirits; if with such Eyes thou could'st behold the Beauty of
the

The Sixth Consideration

the Heavens ; if with such an ardent and passionate Affection thou cou'dst daily fix thy Thoughts upon *Eternity*, the Days of thy Servitude wou'd seem as nothing for the great Love which thou hast for *Eternity* ; then thou wou'dst confess that all thy Labours were sweet and pleasant ; then thou wou'dst own thy Troubles to be Pleasures, and thy Losses to be Gain. For this I must averr, that the more any Man contemplates *Eternity*, the greater Care will he take to live *sobberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.*

THE

Fig. 7.

Isaiah Ch. 57. v. 15.



Thus saith the high & lofty
One, that inhabiteth Eternity.

THE SEVENTH
CONSIDERATION
UPON
ETERNITY.

*How Christians have Painted
Eternity.*

IN a dark Passage Men grope for the Walls,
and are careful of every Step they take;
thus it is with Man's Understanding,
when He endeavours to fathom *Eternity*;
the Passage is rough and difficult, dark and
cloudy, 'tis indeed unpassable. The Way to
it, I grant, is very short, but when we are once
got in, there is no coming out again. But tho'
no Man living is able to form such Ideas of *E-*
ternity, as to be able expressly to determine what
it is, yet its Infinity is so shadow'd out to us
by several Pictures and Representations, that
we

we are not without some glimmering of it. True it is, that whatever we can say or write of *Eternity*, is at the best but a meer Shadow, we may represent it as we please, but the Pictures we draw, are little better. Shou'd we heap, as it were, one Age upon another, the Years that are past, and the Years that are to come, the Sum wou'd still be short of *Eternity*; the Latitude thereof is not to be measur'd, neither by Hours, nor Days, nor Weeks, nor Months, nor Years, nor *Lustra's*, nor *Olympiads*, nor *Indictions*, nor *Jubilees*, nor *Ages*, nor *Plato's* Years, nor by the Motion of the *Eighth Sphere*, which is hardly perceptible; tho' these were multiply'd by a Thousand, or Million, or the greatest Multiplier that can be imagin'd. Neither can it be measur'd by the Stars of Heaven, the Sands of the Sea, the Grass of the Field, or by the Drops of the Rivers; in a Word, the Number of *Eternity* cannot be found out.

It is usual with Mariners when they draw near to Shore, to sound the Depth of the Water with a Plummert; let Reverence and Humility be our Line and Plummert when-ever we attempt to fathom *Eternity*; the Depths of *Eternity* are not to be sounded, but if we will carefully view the Emblem which immediately precedes this Consideration, we shall come much nearer to the Knowledge of it, than we easily imagine.

The Emblem is this.

Christ as a Child just taken, as it were, from the Manger and the Cradle, being almost Naked

ked and without Cloaths, stands aloft among the Clouds with a little Cross upon his Shoulders. In the Clouds there is this Inscription, *Eternity*.

Beneath Christ's Feet upon the Ground sits a Skeleton, who has neither Skin nor Flesh upon Him, but is all o'er Bones; with his Right Hand he lifts up an Apple to his Mouth, in his Left he holds a little Schedule with this Inscription, *Momentum quod delectat, That which Delights is but for a Moment*. Not far from him stands a Raven, who as she is pecking a Shell-Fish, crys out, *Cras, Cras, to Morrow, to Morrow*: Observe in the next Place how the Earth divides, and Vomits up dreadful Flames of Fire with this Inscription, *Aeternum quod cruciat, that which Torments is for ever and ever*. As Christ is coming out of the Clouds, a Man and a Woman, who are suppos'd to represent all Mankind, fall down upon their Knees and Worship him; just before them is an Hour-glass and a Book wide open, in one of the Pages are these Words, *They spend their Days in Wealth or Mirth, and in a Moment go down to the Grave*: In the other, *Who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Near to the Man and Woman stand Two Angels, who with extended Arms direct the Eyes of the Two Adorers, and exhort them to fix them steadily upon Christ. This is the Picture; the Explanation is this.

Job 21. 13.

Rom. 7. 24.

C H A P. I.

Christ Inviting.

OUR Saviour Christ, the Eternal Son of the Eternal God, when in Compassion to lost Mankind, He took upon him our Humane Nature, came into the World in the same weak, naked, destitute Condition as others do. By the disobedience of our First Parent, we lost our Garment of Innocence and Immortality; He was the Cause that our Cloathing is no better, that we are Born thus defenceless and unarm'd; He was the Cause that we his unhappy Off-spring are from ourselves more destitute of Support, than any other Creature whatsoever. Our Saviour Christ not only suffers with us, but for us; He suffers the Punishment which He never deserv'd, and expiates by His Sufferings the Guilt of those Sins which He never committed. But why is that Cross on His Heavenly Shoulders? 'Tis the Bed on which He slept His last, His Chamber was *Golgotha*, His Pillow was a Crown of Thorns, and the Bed on which He expir'd was the Cross. In Consideration of this great Example, many Holy Men in the first Ages of the Church did voluntarily choose to lye upon the Ground, many Years together; and this cold hard Bed was pleasant

pleasant to them; they very rarely suffer'd *their* Psalm 132.
Eyes to sleep, or their Eye-lids to slumber, or the 4.

Temples of their Heads to take any Rest, that they might obtain a joyful Resurrection. The Abbot *Benonius* for many Years made the Ground his Bed, his covering was Hair-cloth, and a Stone his Pillow; and there are many Religious Men who continue to do so even at this Day. But I return to our Saviour Christ, who suffer'd a cruel and ignominious Death, that He might deliver us from Everlasting Punishment. It must be confess'd, that we are still subject to the Laws of our Mortality, and that Death still Exercises some Dominion over us; but this his Power and Dominion will soon be taken from Him, it is but for a Season. Here in this World, the Soul is forc'd, as it were, from the Body in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, and this is what we call dying: But the Case is different with the Damn'd in Hell, alas! Their Torments are infinitely Superiour to our last parting dying Agonies, they are not only much more painful, but much more Lasting; their Duration indeed is for ever and ever. 'Tis their Infelicity to be always tormented, and this is what we call a continual Death; they are always in Pain, always expiring but never Expire. The Child, which is painted standing in the Clouds with a Cross upon his Shoulders, is He who has deliver'd us from this Eternal Death; beneath his Feet sits an old bare Skeleton, which from several distinguishing Marks we may easily Divine to be our First Parent, whom we will suppose to Address his Posterity, whom by his fall he has made so miserable, in the following Manner:

Give

Give Ear unto Him, O ye his unhappy Offspring! And attend unto the Words of his Mouth.

CHAP. II.

Adam Lamenting.

O My Sons! O wretched Offspring! What a dismal Inheritance of Woe and Misery has your Father left you? How are you curs'd by my Transgression? Had I preserv'd my native Innocence, had I been sensible of the pure, sincere, unmingled Happiness, with which I was surrounded, had I but us'd it as I ought to have done, how Happy might ye then have been? But now, my Sons, how miserable are ye by being mine? I have even kill'd you before ye were begotten, and have entail'd upon you Death and Damnation before ye came into Being. Not being contented with the Privileges of my Nature I vainly aspir'd to be like God, I attempted to make myself more than Man, and behold I am less. Call me not Father, that is too kind and tender a Title; rather say, I am a Tyrant and a Murderer, for in me you perish'd, before you cou'd perish. Can I wonder to see you so corrupted and debauch'd? Of whom shall I complain, when you are but what I myself have made you? My
Rebellious

Rebellious Children! How do I mourn and lament your Disobedience, and yet I shew'd you the way to be so? I first transgress'd the Laws of my Creator, and refus'd to obey his Divine Command. The Angels above are asham'd of your Luxury; Why are ye so Intemperate? Alas! That I shou'd ask this Question, when Intemperance was your Father's greatest Fault. God detests and abhors you for being so Ambitious, nothing is more hateful to God than Pride; yet your Father was slain by this dire Monster, the haughty *Lucifer* was proud of his Conquest, and triumph'd in my Fall. O my Sons! See what your Patrimony is, a long and woful Scene of Misery; 'tis true, God promis'd me Heaven for your Inheritance, and according to the Covenant which was made between us, the Regions of Bliss were entail'd upon you; but your unhappy Parent cut off the Entail, and by an Act of the highest Prodigality, made away both his own Estate and yours for an Apple of no value. I valu'd my Wife and the Fruit too much, too much indeed, in that I preferr'd them to you all, nor to you only, but to Heaven and to my Maker. O cursed! O pernicious Repast! What did I not deserve for my Folly and Extravagance? I liv'd in *Paradise*, where blooming Nature wanton'd in her Prime; the whole Creation, one Tree excepted, was at my Command; I was Lord of the Universe; I was wise, and fair, strong, and valiant. No Delight was wanting to perfect my Happiness; the Heavens above were serene and clear, the Climate was temperate, the Air sweet and refreshing, the Beams of the Sun were kind and gentle; both

K

Heaven

Heaven and Earth with all its Excellence seem'd to smile, and bless my Nuptials. Whatever my Eyes beheld was pleasing; my Ears were ravish'd with the Birds sweet Harmony; the Earth of itself brought forth Cinnamon and Saffron; I abounded with Pleasures, I liv'd free from Care; no Fears or Labours discompos'd me, I knew not what it was to be Sick, and of Death I had no Apprehension: I was a kind of God upon the Earth, the Heavenly Inhabitants congratulated my Felicity, I was the only Person who envy'd myself; but because I obey'd not the Voice of God, but audaciously eat the forbidden Fruit, all this train of Evils is come upon me. I am turn'd out of *Paradise*, and banish'd from the Presence of Him that made me; I sought the friendly Covert of the Wood to conceal my Shame; Labour and Grief, Sorrow and Fear, Tears and Calamities are now my Portion: O sad Exchange! I have already endur'd variety of Evils, you yourselves my Children are sensible of it, you have already prov'd it by fatal Experience, and what is yet more Melancholy, even Death itself, which puts an end to our present Sorrows, is oftentimes the beginning of Sorrows Everlasting.

O my Dear Children! How am I touch'd with the Sense of your Misery, what tender Earnings, and soft Relentings do I feel within me? Let your Fathers Follies teach you Wisdom, let the sad Experience of the Loss you have sustain'd, be a perpetual warning to you to abstain from every evil Work; but above all Things, let me advise to Treasure up this Lesson in your Hearts; it is not only short, but its
 Import;

Importance is so weighty and considerable, that it well deserves your careful Remembrance, and that is, *to hate Sin*. See you not those blew and sulphurous Flames, which spring up behind me from the Bowels of the Earth, they began when your unhappy Father fell, but now they will burn for ever and ever. O dreadful State! Who can dwell with Everlasting Burnings? But let this be your Consolation, that it is in your Power to escape them if you please; the fault is our own, and we can justly accuse none but ourselves if ever we come into this Place of Torment. Our Saviour Christ by the Merit of his Sufferings has unbarr'd the Gates of Everlasting Life, which, thro' my Transgression were before kept shut upon me and my Posterity: He calls upon us to repent and enter, but our Entrance must be by the Gate of the Cross. He that seriously repents of his Sins, and exerts his Repentance into actual Amendment, who suffers Affliction and Tribulation in this Life, and is willing at all Times to bear the Cross of his Crucified Saviour, is secure of Bliss and Joy Everlasting; he may satisfy himself, that when *his earthly Tabernacle shall be dissolv'd, he shall have a building of God, a House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*. O my Sons! Think upon Eternity; it is not in your Power to choose whether or no ye will be Immortal; yet a little while and ye shall be happy or miserable for ever. This is the Advice of Adam to his Children,

Qui
Quam meruit poenam, solus digessit in omnes.

*Who by his Fall enslav'd the Innocent,
The Crime was his, we feel the Punishment.*

C H A P. III.

The Raven Croaking.

NEAR to the *Skeleton* of our *First-Parent* is painted a *Raven*, which contributes very much to finish and compleat this Representation of *Eternity*. There are few I believe, who are unacquainted with that known and common saying of *St. Augustin*, *Cras, Cras, Corvi vox est, geme ut Columba & tunde pectus*; *To morrow, to morrow, is the Voice of the Raven, but do thou mourn like the tender Dove, and knock upon thy Breast*. This is the Cause that so many have miss'd of a Blessed *Eternity*; they foolishly neglected to prepare themselves for it while it was Day; they unwisely put it off till to *Morrow*, and thought themselves secure: And this is the Case of a great many in the World, nothing is more common, than for Men to defer their Repentance till the *Morrow*, which is putting it upon a very great Uncertainty; That we may do it with a better Grace, we are apt to make large Promises of Amendment, but the *Morrow* comes, and we are still the same.

Petite

*Petite hinc juvenesque, senesque,
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis.
Cras hoc fiet: idem, cras fiet. Quid? Quasi mag-*
(num

*Nempe diem donas? Sed cum lux altera venit,
Jam cras hesternum consumpsimus: Ecce aliud cras
Egerit hos annos, & semper paulum erit ultra.*

Perfii Satira 5ta. l. 64.

*Unhappy He who does this Work adjourn,
And to Morrow wou'd the search delay:
His lazy Morrow will be like to Day.
But is one Day of Ease too much to borrow?
Yes sure: For Yesterday was once to Morrow.
That Yesterday is gone and nothing gain'd:
And all thy fruitless Days will thus be drain'd;
For thou hast more to Morrows yet to ask,
And wilt be ever to begin thy Task;
Who like the hindmost Chariot-wheels art curs'd,
Still to be near, but ne'er to reach the first.*

Mr. Dryden.

Thus this to Morrow is still put off, till at last Death snatches us away on a sudden, and plunges us into the Gulf of *Eternity*, into the Gulf of Everlasting Horror and Despair; so true is that saying of *St. Augustin*, that this to *Morrow* is the ruine of many, while they say to themselves, to *Morrow*, to *Morrow*, the Gate of Heaven is shut upon them. It was thro' this Consideration, that the Son of *Sirach* so often and so earnestly calls upon us; *Make no* Ecclus. 3.
tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from 7.
*Day to Day, for suddenly shall the Wrath of the
Lord come forth, and in thy Security thou shalt be*

K 3

destroy'd,

destroy'd, and perish in the Day of Vengeance. True is that saying of *Seneca* the Philosopher, *A great Part of our Life, is spent in doing ill, the greatest Part in doing nothing, the whole in doing what we ought not to do.* When the City of *Syracusa* was taken by *Marcellus*, *Archimedes* the Mathematician was so intent upon a Demonstration of *Geometry*, that He minded not the Noise and Confusion of the People. Thus it is with most Men, they are so taken up with worldly Affairs, and are so intent upon improving their Stock, and employing their Money to the best Advantage, all which in the End will profit 'em nothing, that, tho' the Eternal Salvation of their Souls lies at Stake, they never or but rarely think upon *Eternity*.

Luke 10.
41, 42.

Martha, Martha, Thou art careful and troubled about many Things, but one Thing is (absolutely) needful, and that is Happiness; this is the better Part which Mary made it her chief Care to labour after, not the Happiness of this Life, that is imperfect, short, and Transitory, but that Pure, and Perfect, and Spiritual Felicity, which the Saints and Angels enjoy in Heaven, and shall always enjoy for ever and ever.

It is an usual Practice with Men, who understand the World, before they undertake any Thing of Moment, to consider first with themselves, whether it will be worth their while, and what Advantage they shall get by doing it. It were much to be wish'd, that every Christian wou'd regulate his Actions by this excellent Principle; if at the beginning of every Work, we wou'd seriously and constantly ask ourselves, whether what we are about will bring us to
Heaven,

Heaven, and secure to us the Possession of a Blessed Eternity; sure I am, that the Advantage which we shou'd reap by so doing wou'd be very considerable. But alas! I cannot speak it without concern, we Trifle with our Souls; Tho' such Questions as these are of the highest Importance, and do directly tend to our Future Well-being; yet we do not Care to burden ourselves with them; we are glad of any pretence whatever to put them off to another Time, and when the Time appointed comes, we put them off still further, and further: Wretched and miserable Creatures that we are! When our Strength and Vigour is almost exhausted, then we begin to think of working; when we cannot Repent, then we wou'd Repent; when this Life is just expiring, then we are willing to think on the next; when Death with all his train of Terrors begins to shew his gantly Face, then we are in haste to prepare for *Eternity*. What a strange unaccountable Proceeding is this? And yet nothing is more common than for Men to defer the great Work of Repentance, which can never be begun too soon, from one Time to another; how ready is every Sinner to cry, says St. *Augustin*, *I cannot now, I will take some fitter and more convenient Season*; alas, alas! *Can any Season be more proper than the Present? Why then not now?*

Dionysius the first of that Name, King of *Sicily* plunder'd many Temples, and took away a Cloak of Gold-Tissue from off *Jupiter's* Statue, saying, that it was neither fit for Summer, nor Winter; that in the Summer it was too heavy, and that it was not warm in the Winter, and

put a Woollen one in stead of it. In like manner, saith St. *Ambrose*, do many Persons play with God and their Souls. Young Men say, they must conform themselves to the Fashion of the World; Wine and Mufick, Feasting and Dancing, Tennis and Hunting, are proper Diversions; their Spirits are gay, lively, and active, and do naturally dispose them to taste the Sweets and Pleasures of Life, and enjoy themselves with their Companions: But this Scene must be chang'd, as our Years increase; when our Blood grows cool, and the Vigour of our Spirits is almost exhausted, then it is proper to bid Adieu to Pleasures and Diversions; old Men shou'd never appear in Publick, unless it be at Church; they have enough to do to support their weak decrepit Bodies, which are ready, as it were, to fall asunder; they must stay at Home, and indulge their Ease, and look after their Health, what else can be expected from them? Thus it is that we consume our Days; the Summer of our Life is spent in Pleasures; Sickness and Cares employ the Winter; so that we seldom or never think of that perpetual *Eternal Spring*

Gal. 6. 10. which shall be hereafter. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good; let us lose no Time but immediately set about it, let not our Cry be the same as the Ravens, Cras, Cras, to Morrow, to Morrow, lest by delaying to Day, and to Morrow, our Days insensibly glide away from us, and put a Period to our Being. Alas! To Morrow is not in our Power, it is yet to come, but to Day is our own. Agreeable to Ch. 4. 13, which is the Advice of St. James, Go to now, ye 14. that (presume to) say, To Day or to Morrow,*

we

we will go into such a City, and continue there a Year, and buy, and sell, and get gain (as if both Life and the Advantages thereof, depended wholly on yourselves, and not at all on the Divine Providence.) Whereas ye (who speak with such Confidence of the Future) know not what shall be on the Morrow; for, what is your Life? It is even (as) a Vapour that appeareth for a little Time, and then vanisheth away. It was a wise and admirable Reply which *Messodamus* made to one of his Friends, who invited him the next Day to Dinner: *I never durst*, said He, *for many Tears last past, assure myself that I shou'd live till to Morrow, I am every Hour in Expectation of Death.* He is not sufficiently prepar'd to die, who is not always prepar'd; it is certainly an Act of the greatest Rashness, it is Folly and Madness in the highest Degree, it is bidding a kind of Defiance to *Eternity*, for a Man to presume to lie down upon his Bed, with a heavy load of Sins upon his Breast, and to take his Rest and Sleep securely. It is no uncommon and extraordinary Thing for Men to die suddenly; how many Persons, within the Compass of our Knowledge, have in all appearance gone to Bed well in the Evening, and yet been found Dead the following Morning? I will not pretend to determine their State, God only knows, whether they were not hurried from their sweet Repose into a Place of Everlasting Torments. How many Instances have we before our Eyes, or fresh in our Remembrance, of Men who have been struck Dead on a sudden, who have been well and sick, alive and Dead, in less than an Hour? But yet, notwithstanding these astonishing Ex-
amples,

amples, tho' we do not know, but that at one Time or other this may happen to be our Case, how do we procrastinate, and put off our Repentance from Day to Day? Did I say from Day to Day: Alas! That is nothing, we defer it from Year to Year, till at last our Old Enemy snatches us away, and delivers us over Captive to *Eternity*.

St. *Augustin* had many Conflicts with himself, before he was able to conquer and subdue this lazy lingering Inactivity of our Nature; *I was sensible*, saith he, *how much I was entangled with the Vanities of this World; I was sensible of it, and I poured forth such Complaints as these; Quamdiù, quamdiù cras & cras? Quare non hâc horâ finis turpitudinis meæ? How long, how long shall I delay my Repentance? How long shall I say to myself to Morrow, to Morrow? Why do I not immediately give freedom to my Soul? Why do I not break off from my sinful Habits, and begin to live better? These, saith He, were the Complaints which I utter'd in the bitterness of my Anguish, and I wept most abundantly.*

We read in St. *Hierome*, that *Anthony* who was surnam'd *the Great*, when He exhorted the People to Godliness and Vertue, was wont to advise them to keep always in Mind that saying of the *Apostle*, *Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram*, *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*; and whereas St. *Paul* restrains this Prohibition to the Passion of Anger, He extends it to all Sin in general, *Let not the Sun depart*, saith He, as a Witness against you.

Eph. 4. 26.

John

John the *Patriarch* of *Alexandria*, had a Contest with *Nicetas*, a Person of Distinction of the same City. The Cause was to be heard before the Magistrate; the *Patriarch* was Advocate for the Poor, *Nicetas* propos'd to save his Money. Before the Matter was brought to a hearing, they mutually agreed upon a private Meeting, with Design if possible to accommodate the Difference; accordingly they met, and debated the Matter very warmly together; each was resolv'd to defend his Right, so that after a very sharp Contention of several Hours, they were so far from coming to an Agreement, that they were more exasperated against each other than they were before, neither wou'd yield to the other's Proposals; in fine, they parted and left the Matter undetermin'd. *Nicetas* thought it a hardship upon Him to part with His Money; The *Patriarch* on the other Hand thought himself oblig'd to stand up vigorously in Defence of the Poor, that their Cause was the Cause of God, and therefore that He cou'd not give it up without forfeiting his Integrity. However, when *Nicetas* was gone, this wise good *Patriarch* calmly considering what had past, cou'd not but blame and accuse himself for being so obstinate; and tho' his Cause was the Cause of God, yet said he to himself, can I possibly imagine that God will be pleas'd with this my rigid and inflexible Obstinacy? Lo! The Evening draws near, shall I suffer the Sun to go down upon my Wrath? This is impious and contrary to the Advice of the Apostle. Thus this excellent *Patriarch* reason'd with Himself, and immediately dispatch'd some of the

the Principal Persons about Him, who were Men of Credit and Reputation, to *Nicetas*, giving 'em strict Charge, that they shou'd say no more to Him but only this; *Domine, Sol ad occasum est, Sir, the Sun is going down.* These Words so softned the Anger of *Nicetas*, that the fierceness of his Passion immediately abated; so great was their Influence, that He cou'd hardly refrain from Tears; He forthwith went after the Messengers to the *Patriarch*, and coming into his Presence, he humbled himself and address'd Him thus, *Holy Father, I will hereafter be govern'd by you, in this or any other Matter*; upon which they kindly embrac'd each other, and became good Friends. So great was the Charm of this short Sentence, *Sol ad occasum est, The Sun is going down*, that it immediately produc'd that Peace, which a long and noisie War of Tongues was not able to effect. Let every Wicked and Ungodly Sinner repeat this Sentence every Evening to himself, *The Sun is going down*, perhaps the Sun of thy Life may be setting; shou'd thy Breath this Night be taken from thee, what will thy Future Condition be? Canst thou hope to be Happy? Dost not thou dread being miserable for ever? Do therefore what thou hast to do while it is Day, *do it with thy might.* Thy Sun is going down, let it not be a Witness of thy Luxury and Intemperance, of thy Theft and Blasphemy, of thy Envy and Detraction, nor of any one Sin, of which thou hast not repented. If the least Spot or Blemish be on our Cloaths or Faces, we are presently solicitous to wipe it off; how comes it to pass that we are so much concern'd for these, and at the same Time so

Eccles. 9.
10.

so regardless of the Pollutions of our Souls? Are their Corruptions of so little Importance, that we can see and suffer them patiently? Or can we suffer them, and not endeavour to recover their native Brightness and Purity, by washing away that sinful Contagion with which they are infected? If at any Time we fall into Sin, we ought without delay to expiate the Guilt of it, the sooner we attempt it, the more easie will be the Expiation. Our Repentance must not only be sincere but speedy, lest the *Man* (of whom we read in the Gospel) *who planted a Fig-tree in his Vineyard, come and seek for Fruit, and finding none, say unto the Dresser of his Vineyard, cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground?* When the fatal Sentence is once gone forth, there is no recalling it, let us therefore lay hold on the present Opportunity, and be heal'd while we may. The Brute-Beasts which have no Understanding will teach us this Lesson: When the Stag is wounded by the Huntsman's Spear, he immediately has recourse to the Herb *Dittany*, which he knows will heal him; The Swallows cure the blindness of their Young Ones with *Celendine*; the Sick-Dog makes haste to the Grass, to give himself a Vomit; the Toad, fighting with the Spider, as soon as she begins to swell, eats a little Plantain and presently recovers.

Luke 13.
6, 7.

All these are led by natural Instinct, they know what will do them good, and they accordingly fly to it in their Extremity. But Man, unthinking foolish Man, who is so proud of his Reason, and Understanding, tho' he is mortally wounded almost every Day, yet will
not

not apply Himself to the Physician; he will not come, that he may be heal'd. He Eats and Drinks, and keeps the same bad Company as he did before, he lies down to rest, and sleeps securely, he troubles not himself with the Thoughts of Repentance, he had rather be sick than endure so sharp and violent a Remedy.

If we wou'd listen to the Counsel of the Holy Angels, who are appointed by God to preside over us, and to guide and direct us in the way to Heaven (as they are represented in this Emblem of Eternity) we shou'd not presume to lie down upon our Bed, before we had made our Peace with God, and reconcil'd ourselves to Him. They kindly admonish us, that our Sun is going down a-main, and will shortly set in Everlasting Darknes; they put us in Mind, that the Glas of our Life is almost spent; they warn us of our approaching Dissolution; they bid us remember, that we shall die like Men, and see a Judgment after Death; but notwithstanding all these seasonable and wholesom Admonitions, we still continue the same Course of Life, let our Sun set, let our Glas run out, come Death, come Judgment, we still go on in the ways of Sin, and sleep as securely as if these Threatnings were like Sick Mens Dreams, meer *Chimera's*, the Fantoms of a wild and shatter'd Imagination. Unhappy Man! Who-soever thou art.

Virg. Æn.
4. 560.

Potes hoc sub Casu ducere somnos?

Is this a Time to close thy Eyes to sleep?

With

With what Comfort can a Man lie down upon his Bed, whose guilty Conscience is perpetually upbraiding him with the Crimes he has committed? How can he compose himself to rest, when Eternal Death hovers round about him? How can he admit Death into his Bosom? How can he close his Eyes to sleep, which is the perfect Image of Death, and not be afraid? You Reply, that you are one of those that can go to sleep without any Apprehensions; that you have often done so, and that no Evil was ever Consequent upon it. Be not over-Confident, that may happen in an Hour which has not happen'd in a Thousand; do not presume that you are past all Danger; consider I beseech you, how long you have to live; that your Soul is not far from Death, Hell and Eternity; that the interval between them is very inconsiderable, it is gone in a Breath: If you will deal sincerely with yourself, you must confess, that you are but one small remove from Death, that a little step is the Distance which divides you. He need not to spend all his Shafts upon you, one Arrow is sufficient to put a Period to your Being. A malignant and corrupted Air may poyson you with its Infection; a Humour may fall down from the Head upon your Lungs, some inward Passage may be stopp'd up, the vital Spirits of the Heart may be suffocated, or the beating of the Arteries intercepted; one or other of these Accidents may discharge your Soul, and send it to *Eternity*, when you least suspect any such Thing. There are a Thousand Ways of dying suddenly; that Death is sudden which surprizes a
Man

Man unprovided to die, but he who has his Loins girt up, and is always prepar'd to meet his Fate, cannot die suddenly. An unpremeditated Death is the worst of Deaths, and therefore it highly concerns all Persons, let their Age be what it will, to look upon every Hour of their Life to be their last. How many Men have perish'd by a Fall? By the Sword? By Poyson? How many have been destroy'd by Fire and Water? Some have lost their Lives by the kick of a Horse; and others have been torn to pieces by wild Beasts. 'Tis impossible to enumerate the variety of Deaths which every-where surround us; who can tell the Number of the Pores of his Body, and yet every one of them is a Passage for Death, by which he softly steals upon us, to take away our Life. *It is certain, saith St. Augustin, That thou art born, because thou shalt die; and in this, because Death is certain, but no Man, can tell the Day of*

Joh 3. 22. his Death. I know not, saith Job, How long I shall live, or how soon my Maker may take me away: (Or, as it is express'd in the Vulgar Translation,) I know not to give flattering Titles, in so doing my Maker wou'd soon take me away. In the midst of Life we are in Death; we carry this Enemy about with us in our Bosom; no Man can assure himself, that he shall live till the Evening. This inexorable Destroyer of our Human Nature, has many ways by which he annoys us; Thunder and Lightning, Spears, Swords and Arrows, are the dire Instruments, by which the fierce Tyrant executes his Vengeance upon us Poor Mortals. But I need not borrow Examples from the Ancients, the Age which we live in has Plenty sufficient; for not

to

to exceed the narrow Bounds of our own Acquaintance, how many have laid themselves down to sleep, and have slept for ever? Who will never more awake in this Life, never I say awake, till the last great Trumpet calls 'em from their Graves, and summons 'em to Judgment. Death does not always send his Messengers before him to signify his Coming; He often surprizes us without any Ceremony, and strikes us to the Heart, when we little imagin'd that the Enemy was near. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day, nor the Hour.* ^{Matt. 25. 13.}

We may, I grant, repent in Hell, but such a Repentance will do us no service; *Behold now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation,* ^{2 Cor. 6. 2.} *bring forth therefore Fruit meet for Repentance;* ^{Matt. 3. 8.} let us do our Work while it is Day, the Night ^{John 9 4.} cometh when no Man can work. The Day, saith *Origen*, is the space of this Life, which tho' it may seem long and tedious, is extremely short if compar'd with *Eternity*; the Day of our Life is soon at an End, the Night comes on and it Expires, but the Day of *Eternity* shall know no Night, it shall shine for ever.

Let us make these Things the subject of our Thoughts, the constant Theme of our daily Meditations; *Let us remember them upon our Beds, and think upon them when we are waking:* But more especially are those concern'd to do so, whose Consciences are laden and oppress'd with Sin; let them seriously consider that Death is the Gate that leads to *Eternity*, and forasmuch as the Time of our Death is

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uncertain, let us prepare ourselves to meet Him, let us live in a constant Expectation of his Coming, for according as our State and Condition is, when Death seizes us, such will our final Sentence be, at the Day of Retribution.

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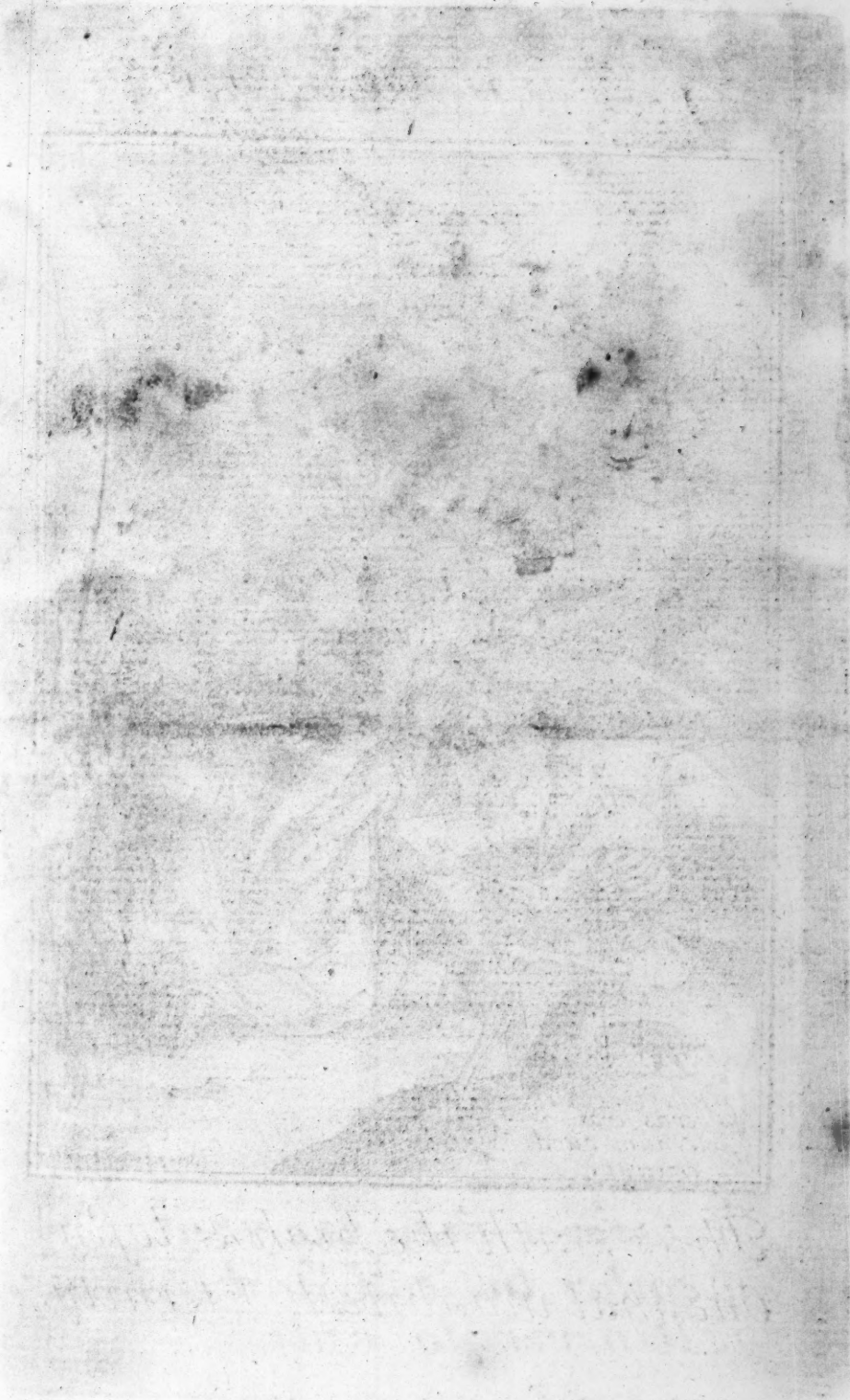


Fig. 8.

Ecclesiasticus. Ch. 7. v. 36.



*Whatsoever thou takest in hand,
remember the end and Thou
shalt never do a miss. —*

THE EIGHTH
CONSIDERATION
UPON
ETERNITY.

*That Christians ought not only to
Paint Eternity, but to Meditate
upon it.*

L Eaving now the Royal Psalmist, and other Devout and Religious Men, who employ'd their Days in meditating upon *Eternity*, let us descend into ourselves, and commune with our own Hearts, and in our Chamber, and be still. He wanders too far, and brings both himself and his Salvation into danger, who by being too intent on the Things of this World, forgets those that are *Eternal*.

If you ask the Lawyers, they will inform you, that a perpetual Title to a yearly Rent, Suppose the Sum as small as you please, ought not to be parted with, and that all such Titles are very valuable. Now if all such Titles, tho' the Annual Income be very inconsiderable, are so highly esteem'd, and Men for the most part so sollicitous to purchase them; whence comes it to pass, that we are so wretchedly negligent and careless in Purchasing a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven? We go to Law about the smallest Matters, and commence a long and tedious Suit, which lasts oftentimes many Years before it is determin'd; and in the meantime we tamely and stupidly suffer others to carry away an Eternal Inheritance. *O foolish People and unwise!* What can be the Reason of so amazing a Proceeding? Does Heaven seem vile in our Eyes? Or is the Purchase of *Eternity* so mean and contemptible, that we do not think it worth our Care? How do we Sweat, and Toil, and Labour in pursuing after Temporal Things? But as for *Eternity*, we look upon it as a very distant and remote Possession, and therefore we pretend, that we have not Time to think upon it; but if we had, it wou'd still be neglected, we want not Time but Inclination. It is a very painful and laborious Task, to keep our Eyes intent upon those Objects, which we cannot see thro'; the Objects which are near and present to us are much more pleasing, the Taste we have of them is more delightful, and transporting; and who wou'd part with a present Satisfaction for one in Reversion? Good God! What a prodigious blind-

Deut. 32.
6.

blindness? What an extravagant and dangerous Frenzy is this? We look for Certainty where there is none, but where it is, we seek it not; we are desirous in our Temporal Affairs to act upon good Grounds, but as to our Eternal State, we desire no Security, tho' we might have all, that we cou'd reasonably desire. If a Man lends another a Sum of Money, He immediately demands a Bond or Mortgage equivalent to it; it is the general Cry, I desire to be Certain, if I part with my Money I expect good Security, I am resolv'd to run no hazards, but to Act as safely as possibly I can. Things that are Precarious and at a Distance, are much over-balanc'd by Things Present and Certain; what says the Proverb? *One Bird in the Hand is worth Two in the Bush*; and again, *Better is a Wren in a Cage, than an Eagle in the Clouds*. We are of *Plautus's* Mind, we carry our Eyes in our Hands, and believe nothing but what we feel. We seek for Certainty in Things that are Uncertain, which, generally speaking, deceive us most, when we place the greatest Confidence in them. But notwithstanding this great Uncertainty of all Human Things, how different is our Conduct in Relation to the other Life; we look upon it as a precarious Reversion; and yet the Assurance we have of it, is much greater, and more to be depended upon, than any Temporal Security whatsoever. Our Saviour Christ does positively assure us, that if we keep his Commandments, we shall enter into Life; *If thou wilt enter into Life, saith our Matt. 19. Lord, keep the Commandments*. This is a certain and infallible Way of securing to ourselves a Blessed Eternity; if we perform the Condition

of Obedience, God is faithful who has promis'd, and He will not fail us: But then again, if we break but one of the least of his Commandments, and do not repent of what we have done; if at the same Time when the Offence was committed, we do not endeavour to expiate the Crime, and to reconcile ourselves to God, and make our Peace with Him, we apparently bring our Salvation into Danger, and may possibly come short of Heaven, and miss of that Immortal Happiness, to which they only have a Right and Title, who keep his Commandments. Such is the weakness and frailty of our Nature, that we carry a Thousand Causes of Death about with us; we are, at the furthest, but a little step from the Grave, we do not know but that we are just upon it; and yet, notwithstanding the Danger we are in, we obstinately persist in a State of Damnation, in which shou'd Death suddenly take us away, we are lost for ever beyond Redemption. Is it not Presumption in the highest Degree, for Men thus to hazard their Eternal Salvation, when they might so easily, and with so little Pains secure it, and not run any Risque at all?

If for every Sin, or for every Hour of a Mans Life, He was doom'd to suffer a Year in Hell, and no longer; the Punishment wou'd be tolerable. Upon such a Presumption, Men wou'd be tempted to continue in their Sins; and I do not at all doubt, but that a great many wou'd never leave them, cou'd they be assur'd that the Torments of the Damn'd wou'd ever have an End. We find by sad and fatal Experience, that

that notwithstanding the Assurance we have of the *Eternity* of Hell-fire, and that the Torments of those miserable Wretches who groan under the Wrath of God, are both for their Degree and Quality, so exceeding great, that every Hour seems a Year unto them; yet there are some bold and daring Sinners, who plunge themselves Head-long into Everlasting Destruction.

If all the severest and most barbarous Tortures, which were ever invented by the Tyrants of the Earth, who by Anxious Thoughts and Hellish Contrivance, improv'd and refin'd the Art of Cruelty and brought it to Perfection; If these, I say, were to be heap'd upon the Head of one Man, and he were to endure them for a Hundred Years, yet they wou'd not come near the Pains of the Damn'd even for one Day, *So fearful a Thing is it to fall into the Hands of the Living God.* The quickest and forest Punishments which in all Ages have been inflicted upon Thieves, Parricides and other Malefactors, are seldom known to have lasted above Three or Four Days, or a Week at furthest; but the Torments of those who lie wailing under the Vengeance of a Power arm'd with Omnipotence, are not for a Year, or an Age, but for an interminable Duration; God will always punish them, and He can never Torment them enough, tho' their Torments will endure to all *Eternity*.

Heb 10.
31.

C H A P. I.

Eternity doth not only deprive us of all Comfort, but even of Hope itself.

Hope is a lively cheerful Principle, it is the Refuge of the Miserable, it softens and abates the Evils of Life, and administers Comfort and Consolation to us, under the greatest and most grievous Calamities. Such is the goodness of Almighty God, that in all our Adversities He leaves us some little glimmerings of Hope, to support and sustain our sinking Spirits.

When we lie languishing on the Bed of Sickness, and are ready to expire almost every Moment, yet even then, we are not without Hope. But it is not so with those wretched Sinners, who are gone into the other World, and are enter'd into the Regions of Darkness; they alas! Are all Despair; Hope, which in this Life comes to all, comes not to them: This is a mighty Aggravation of their Sufferings, to endure the quickest and sharpest Pains, and at the same Time to despair of any future Ease, is Misery in Perfection. The Prophet *Daniel*
both

both heard and saw the Angel that came down from Heaven and said, *Hew the Tree down and destroy it*, cut off its Branches, shake off its Leaves, and disperse its Fruit, yet leave the *Stump of the Root thereof in the Earth*. The Fruit and Leaves, saith St. Ambrose, are scatter'd, but the Root is preserv'd; by which he insinuates, that when all our Joys fly away and leave us, and Evils and Calamities succeed in their Place, yet even then we are not without Hope. The Root is preserv'd, tho' our Comforts are gone, Hope is left behind. But it is otherwise in Hell; *Behold the Day cometh, that shall burn them up*, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither Root nor Branch. Agreeable to which is that Expression in Job, who, complaining of his Misery, cries out, *He hath destroy'd me on every side, and I am gone, and mine Hope hath been remov'd like a Tree. The Hope or Expectation of the Wicked shall perish*. Let us therefore Hope, while there is a Place for Hope, but let us take this Caution along with us, let us Hope for nothing but what we ought to Hope for, and then our Hope will be chang'd into Enjoyment. The Advice is good which the Poet Ovid gives us in the following Distich.

Malachy
Ch. 4. 1.

Job 19. 10.

Prov. 10.
23.

*Omnia sunt hominum tenui pendentia filo,
Et subito Casu, quæ valere, ruunt.*

*All Humane Things hang on a slender stay,
They which are strongest soon are snatch'd away.*

We must not therefore place our Hopes upon any Thing in this Life; let us rather follow St. Bernard's Directions, who Points out
to

to us a much better way ; Our *Faith*, saith He, assures us, that God has prepar'd unconceivable good Things for them that love him ; Our *Hope* perswades us, that these good Things are reserv'd for us, and our *Charity* says, let us make haste, let us fly to enjoy them. True *Hope*, says St. *Gregory*, raises the Affections of the Soul to Heaven, insomuch, that it is not sensible of the Evils and Calamities which happen to it in this Mortal State. True *Hope* inspires us with a lively Sense of the Folly and Vanity of all worldly Things, that they are but for a Moment. But O that Moment, on which depends our Eternity ! The sad and gloomy Hour of Death, and our last parting dying Agonies, are properly that Moment ; this is that precious unvaluable Jewel, to purchase which the prudent Merchant Sold all that he had ; but alas ! There are few who truly understand its worth : Every Man, saith St. *Hierome*, is too too careless of his own Salvation, and what is the Occasion of this neglect ? How comes it to pass, that a Matter of such a vast Importance is no more regarded ? The fault is in our Sight, which is weak, languishing and feeble, our Eyes are not bright and piercing enough for distant Objects, we see nothing but what is near us. I do not now speak of those who are arriv'd to Man's Estate, or are full of Years ; even Boys and Girls are instructed from their Infancy in the Principles of Vice, and are taught the little sordid Arts of being miserably Covetous ; as their Years come on, they are inspir'd with an insatiable desire of Riches, and all their Thoughts are wholly employ'd how to improve and manage their Effects to the greatest Advantage :

Hoc

*Hoc monstrant vetula pueris poscentibus Assam,
Hoc discunt omnes ante Alpha & Beta puella:*

Juven. Sat. 14. l. 208.

*Taught by their Nurses little Children get,
This Lesson sooner, than their Alphabet.*

Mr. Dryden.

By this unhappy Way of Proceeding, they are train'd up in a profound Ignorance of Heavenly Things; or if by Accident they have any Knowledge of *Eternity*, it is immediately forgotten. Both Old and Young, understand too well the value of their Money, and this is the sad and fatal Reason, that *Heaven* and *Eternity* have not a Place in all their Thoughts.

CHAP. II.

*Eternity is a Sea, a Monster with
Three Heads; it is also a Foun-
tain of Joy and Gladness.*

LET me desire thee O Christian, whosoever thou art, that goest often to hear Sermons, but art seldom attentive to what is deliver'd, to resolve me this Question. Suppose thou

thou shouldst undertake, with a little small Spoon to empty the Sea into a Neighbouring River, which runs into the Sea again; in how long Time couldst thou hope to empty it? Or suppose that you were to take it out by Hogs-heads, and to empty it immediately into another Channel, in how many Years couldst thou propose to drain it dry. You will, I doubt not, think it an intolerable Pain to lie Frying in Hell for so long a Time, but the Damn'd wou'd think otherwise; the Time how long and grievous soever wou'd be very grateful and welcome to them, they wou'd not think it long and tedious, provided they had any Hopes of escaping an *Eternity* of Torments.

Among the Fables of the *Heathen* Poets, we read of a Monster with Three Heads; if there be any such Monster in being, he is certainly in Hell, where there is a kind of Triple *Eternity*, which like this feign'd Monster, may not improperly be said to have Three Heads; *The Pain of Loss, the Pain of Sense, and the Worm of Conscience which never Dies.* Wretched and improvident Creatures that we are! Tho' our Passage be so dangerous and slippery, yet we march on, as boldly and triumphantly, as if we were to pass thro' the Fields of *Tempe*, or were to go thro' *Paradise*. We never Dream of meeting any Enemies in the way, we sing and rejoice and think on nothing, but of a Safe and Happy Arrival at the Haven of our Desires. We cannot sure be ignorant, if we are, we are much to blame, that there are two Gates which lead to *Eternity*, one to the Everlasting Regions of Happiness, the other to Eternal Ruine and Destruction.

Destruction, and that according as we behav'd ourselves in our Pilgrimage, we must enter in at one of these Gates, and be Happy or Miserable for ever and ever.

Laurentius Justinianus, wond'ring at the Madness of these pleasant Travellers, breaks forth into this Exclamation. *O the lamentable Condition of Mortal Men, who tho' they are in a State of Banishment, do yet Exult and Triumph in the way!* Be it then our Care, not to fix or settle our Affections upon any Thing in our Pilgrimage, let us keep them cool and indifferent to the Things of this Life, until we arrive at our Heavenly Country; and let us make it our principal Endeavour to gain admittance into that Gate, which is the beginning of a Blessed Eternity. God has created us for Pleasure rather than for Labour, but we must not mistake the Time and Place, our Joys and Delights are reserv'd for Eternity, and therefore we must not expect them here; he has appointed this Life, to be a State of Tryal and Discipline, that we may prepare ourselves for the next, and make ourselves worthy to be Partakers of *that fulness of Joy*, which is in His Presence, *and of those Pleasures, which are at his* Psalm 16.
Right-Hand for evermore. But how, or by what 11.
Means may these Pleasures be obtain'd? Do you not know what our Saviour says? *The* Matt. 11.
Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the vio- 12.
lent take it by force. Consider with thyself; am I this violent Person? I am violent indeed in taking my Ease, in Feasting, and Dancing, and indulging my Wanton and Sensual Inclinations; but this is not that Violence which is
here

here recommended to our Christian Practice; No: We must Fight the good Fight, we must so run, that we may obtain; we must labour and strive to enter in at the strait Gate, we must now offer Violence to the Kingdom of Heaven, now while we are in the Prime and Vigour of our Days, that at that dismal Melancholy Hour, when our Souls shall depart from our Bodies, and translate us from Time to Eternity, we may rejoice in our past Life, and Triumph in our Hopes of Everlasting Felicity. Let us therefore strive and labour earnestly; let us labour and offer Violence to ourselves, in mortifying our Lusts, and restraining our evil and corrupt Inclinations, which if we faithfully do, God in his Mercy will reward our short Labours with Eternal Rest, and Crown our Travels with Glory Everlasting.

If we seek for true and solid Joy among the Delights and Vanities of this World, we seek it in a Place, where it is not; we must look for it in Heaven, if we hope to find it. *God prepared a Gourd, and made it to come over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his Head, to deliver him from his Grief, and Jonah was exceeding glad of the Gourd.* And what is all the Pleasure and Vanity of this World? Is it not like the Prophets Gourd, flourishing for a Time, and yielding a grateful and refreshing Shadow. The Rich Man rejoices over his Riches, his Riches are his Gourd, and the Joy which they give him is exceeding Great. The Drunkards and Gluttons exult at their Tables, they fill themselves with Wine and fare deliciously every Day; the voluptuous Man enjoys his

his unlawful Pleasures, but his Delights are Gall and Bitterness in the end. For what became of *Jonah's Gourd*? *God prepar'd a Worm*, *Jonah 4. 5.* and it smote the Gourd that it wither'd. Where now, O *Jonah*, is thy Gourd? Where now is thy Joy? It is gone and vanish'd. In the same Manner shall our Gourds and Satisfactions leave us; *Our Riches shall make themselves Wings*, *Prov. 23. 5.* and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven. The Gluttons Dainties soon will fail him, he will either put an end to them by his Profusion, or his Excess will quickly take him from them. And as for the Pleasures of the voluptuous Man, how sweet and ravishing soever they may be, they are but for a Moment. In a Word, all the Pleasures of this World are short and uncertain, but the Joys of the Blessed are for ever.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

That the taste which we have in this Life of the Joys of Eternity, is very sweet and ravishing to some Persons: This Truth is illustrated and confirmed by a very great and considerable Example.

T*heodorus* a Young Gentleman Born of Christian Parents, Young indeed if we consider his Age, but Old in respect of his Wisdom and Prudence, was very sensible of this Truth. So powerful was the Taste which he had of *Eternity*, that, at a solemn Day of Rejoicing, which was celebrated throughout all *Ægypt*, when his Father's House was full of Company, and nothing was to be seen but Feasting and Dancing; when Joy appear'd in every Face, and every one prepar'd to bear a Part in the general Gladness; he retir'd into his Closet, and finding himself struck with a Heavenly Dart, he began thus to expostulate with himself. O unhappy *Theodorus*! Wer't thou Lord of the Universe, what wou'd it profit thee? If all the World were at thy Command, what real Advantage could'st thou propose to thyself from so vast a Possession? 'Tis true,

true, thou hast many Things, but how long shalt thou have them? Thou may'st Eat, and Drink, and take thy Pleasures, but Oh! How long will these Pleasures last? I grant, that such a Life wou'd please me, cou'd I always enjoy it; how then shall I Act? Shall I give myself up to the Pleasures of Sense, and destroy my Hopes of Eternal Felicity? Say *Theodorus*, is it agreeable to the Laws of Christianity, to make a Heaven of this Earth? Can I enjoy my Pleasures here, and enjoy them hereafter? I am much deceiv'd, if Christ did not shew us another way to Heaven, and *that we must through much Tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of God.* AAs 14. 22.

Abstain therefore from sensual Pleasures, and let *Eternity* have the Preference in thy Heart. He had no sooner said these Words, but with weeping Eyes, and sighing Heart, he retir'd into an Inner-Room, and having first prostrated himself upon the Ground in an humble Adoration, he pray'd to God in the following Manner. O Eternal God! Thou knowest all the Secrets of my Heart, and my Groans and Sighs are not hid from thee; thou know'st my Necessities before I ask, and my Ignorance in asking; alas! I know not what to pray for, I know not how to make my Addresses; only this one Thing let me beg of thy Mercy, that it may please thee of thine Infinite Goodness to deliver thy Servant from Eternal Death: Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee, that I desire to be with Thee, and to celebrate thy Praises for ever and ever; hear me, O God, and have Mercy upon me. As he was thus praying, his Mother surpriz'd him, who perceiving by the redness of his Eyes the disorder he was in, like a tender and indulgent Parent enquir'd the

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Cause

Cause of his being so disconsolate ; Dear Son, said she, *Why are you so sad ? What is the Reason that you deny us your Company ? Is this a proper Time to retire ? Why, my Son, do you choose to be absent, when you are so much wanted ? Your well-natur'd Friends desire your Company, the Dinner is now ready, come, come away, and increase the Pleasure of the Entertainment.* Theodorus reply'd ; *I desire you, good Madam, to make my Excuse in the best Manner that you can ; my Stomach at present is much out of Order, let me desire you not to urge me to eat against my Appetite.* His Mother being satisfied with this honest Excuse, left him to himself. As soon as she was gone, he began to confer with God and his Soul about *Eternity*, and (with an Application which was every way suitable to so great a Work) to examine his former mispent Life. What have I been ? said He to himself ; or rather, what will my Condition be, shou'd I be shut out from the Kingdom of Heaven ? Some go one way to Heaven, and some another : It signifies little which way we go, so we get thither ; as the ways are different, so likewise are Men, and therefore it is reasonable, that every one shou'd make Choice of that way, which he thinks most convenient. There is a long way, and a short, the one is safe, the other is dangerous. If I am afraid to go in the way which is long and dangerous, it remains that I choose the shortest way ; which if I do, the Holy Angels will watch over me in my Pilgrimage, they will Guide and Protect me, and be my Consolation. But how will this afflict my Relations ? They will perhaps mourn at first, but in Time their Mourning shall be turn'd into

into Joy. Go *Theodorus*, set about it immediately, and be not too credulous. I hope, that if I meet with any powerful Adversaries I shall be able to oppose them. But what Method shall I take with those that are easie, kind, and intreating, who will perhaps weep over me? These I confess are most to be dreaded; I am naturally of a soft and tender Disposition, but in such a Case I must resolve to go forward, and must pray unto my Saviour for the Aid and Supply of his Holy Spirit, to strengthen and animate my feeble Resolution. But suppose thy mournful loving Mother, to whom thou art dearer than Life itself, shou'd entreat thy stay? Shou'd she fold thee in her tender Arms, fall upon thy Neck and Kiss thee? Shou'd she shew thee her naked panting Breasts, and bid thee to remember that they gave thee Nourishment; wou'd not thy Mother's soft Perswasions charm thee into a Compliance? In such a Case, call to Mind that excellent Saying of *St. Hierome*; *Fly immediately to the Standard of Christ's Cross. and remember that 'tis sometimes a Vertue to be cruel.* But it is a great and difficult Thing to undertake so mighty a Change in the very Spring and Prime of Life; 'tis difficult, I Confess, but Experience assures us, that there are many in the World who cannot serve God as they ought, in that they began too late to serve him. They serve him best, who take upon themselves the Yoke of Christ in the Days of their Youth. But I have been tenderly and delicately brought up, and I am now entring upon a Life of great Severity; how shall I be able to support myself under it? I hope the best, but how long?

A Year or Two ; but that is not sufficient, I must go further, and resolve to endure it as long as I live. Consider therefore, either do not begin it, or continue to the End. I know, that of myself I am not able to surmount these Difficulties, but *I can do all Things, thro' Christ which strengthens me.* But Customs and Habits are not easily Chang'd ; to curb Desire, to break the stubborn head-strong Will, and superinduce a kind of second Nature, is a very painful and laborious Work. Hitherto I have liv'd among the Great, and enjoy'd my Pleasures without any Interruption, how shall I relish a poor, and humble, and servile Life ? How long shall I endure so severe a Penance ? I must not here think, as in a Comedy, to play my Part for a Day or Two only, but must continue to act it as long as I live : The Scenes of this Theatre are long and tedious, when once you are vested with the Poor-man's Habit, there is no returning to your Purple again, till God shall cloath you with Glory and Immortality. O *Theodorus*, will thy Constancy and Perseverance hold out to the Last ? I will do my best ; I will propose to myself some illustrious Examples, and whom can I better imitate than my Blessed Saviour, the only-begotten Son of God, who humbled himself, and took upon him our Human Nature, and endur'd a hard and rigorous Life ? Is not his glorious Example sufficient to encourage my Imitation ? Shall I refuse to bear his Cross ? Shall any Sufferings make me afraid ? Am I better than He ? But is it not grievous to be depriv'd of my Liberty, to live a Prisoner all my Days in a narrow lonely solitary Cell ? Think better upon it,
think

think that to Morrow you will be in Subjection to another, and that you must conform your Will to his; but in this also will I follow the Example of my Blessed Saviour; who came down John 6. 38. from Heaven, not to do his own Will, but the Will of him that sent him. Nor shall I find it a difficult Matter to follow the Captain of my Salvation; who is it that Commands me? Is it the Voice of God or Man? It is the Voice of God, to whom I must pay an implicate Obedience. But surely it is too great a heighth of Philosophy for a Man to renounce Riches, and to embrace Poverty; to lose the Satisfaction of administering Relief to the Necessities of the Poor, and to stand in need of the Charity of others. O hard Condition! Who can submit to such an Exchange? Who can bid adieu to the Conveniences of Riches, and not thirst after them? How long shall I debate this Matter with myself? How long shall I keep my Mind in suspense, fluctuating, as it were, between Hope and Fear? Have I not the Example of my Lord before me? I will lift up mine Eyes to my crucified Saviour, who was mock'd and scourg'd, and put to a cruel and shameful Death. When He left the Happy Mansions of the Blessed, and came down from Heaven to dwell among us, what usage did He meet with? The particular Circumstances of His Birth, and Death are an evident Demonstration. When He came into the World, his Parents were forc'd to lay Him in a Manger; and when He died, His Body was Naked and without any Covering. During His Life He was so persecuted by the cruel and unrelenting Jews, that He had Matt. 8. 20. not where to lay His Head. How many Fatigues did

did He undergo? He was burnt up with Heat, and ready to faint and perish with Thirst; how unwearied was He in doing Good? How patient under Sufferings? How contented in Poverty? How constant in Labour? How mild and gentle when Reproach'd? His Example was a lively Transcript of His Doctrine, and shall I be ashamed of so glorious a Leader, shall I blush to be enroll'd among the Number of His Disciples? I will either be what my Lord will have me, or I will no longer be *Theodorus*. Such is the Love which I have for my Saviour, that I am ready to suffer, Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Nakedness; I am ready to suffer Contempt and Reproach, ready to be Bound, to be Burnt or Sawnd asunder: These Sufferings are of a very short Continuance, but the Joys and Torments of *Eternity* are for ever. I will therefore take my leave of the World; adieu ye false deceitful Pleasures, adieu ye vain and transitory Things, I esteem you not; my Soul is now upon the Wing to Heaven; and *Eternity* is the only Object of my Wishes; O *Eternity!* *Eternity!* How welcome art thou to me? Welcome as Rest to the weary Traveller; Welcome as Mercy to a Man condemn'd; how is my Soul transported with *Eternity*? O *Eternity!* How welcome art thou to me, there is nothing that I desire in Comparison of Thee?

In the Strength and Virtue of these elevated Contemplations, his Soul was so inflam'd with the Love of God, and of that *Eternity* of Happiness, which the Saints and Angels enjoy in Heaven, that he fully resolv'd to take his Farewel of his tender Parents, to leave his Friends,
and

and to abandon his Riches and Delights for ever. Nor did He enter upon this Resolution hastily or unadvisedly, but with deep Thought and much Deliberation; He did not make it in a Fit or Humour, but Leisurely and by Degrees, and accordingly he took some Time before he put his Resolution in Practice; he did not pass from one extreme to another, but inur'd himself first to some little Severities, which having easily Conquer'd, he continu'd to improve from Vertue to Vertue, and became at last one of *Pachomius's* Disciples. In this manner did *Theodorus* dedicate himself to God, and Eternity; these were the Delights and Pleasures of his Soul, and he was *satisfied with them*, even *Palm 63.* as it were, with Marrow and Fatness: As he was not of their Opinion, who look upon a Future State as a Fable, so he chose to make himself a Fable to the World, rather than lose the ravishing Hopes of a blessed Eternity.

Let us learn from this pious and excellent Example, to prepare ourselves for a Future State: There are many in the World, who live in so wicked and ungodly a Manner, as if it were indeed a cunning devis'd Fable, fram'd and invented by some wise Politicians to keep Mankind in awe, and that in reality there was no such Thing; but let such take Care, *how they Treasure up unto themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God, who will render to every Man according to his Deeds.* Men and Brethren, let me freely Address you in the Words of St. Peter, *The Day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night, in the which the Heavens shall pass away* *Rom 2. 5, 6.* *2 Pet 3. 10, 11, 12.*

away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent heat, the Earth also and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these Things shall be dissolv'd, what manner of Persons ought ye to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on Fire shall be dissolv'd, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat. What an astonishing Account is this of the Day of Judgment? Who can hear it and not tremble? And yet, where shall we find that Holy Conversation and Godliness, which the *Apostle* does so earnestly recommend? We walk after our own Lusts and say, like the Scoffers, whom St. Peter here re-
 2 Pet, 3, 4. proves; where is the Promise of his coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue, as they were, from the beginning of the Creation. But if we will not believe St. Peter, let us attend to the Words of our Blessed Saviour who
 Matt 7. is Truth itself; For wide is the Gate, and broad
 13. is the way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Sure I am, Men wou'd not be so daring to enter into it, if they really believ'd that there was no Possibility of returning, but that they shou'd abide therein for ever; it is therefore a very plain Case, that they look upon it as a pious Invention. You will possibly Reply, that you believe a Future State, and that you hope and wish for it. But alas! How great is your Faith? How cold and indifferent are your Hopes and Expectations? When a little present Pleasure, when the prospect of Interest, and the soft enticing Blandishments of the Flesh, do so steal away our Hearts, and take so full a Possession of them, that they
 insen-

insensibly cool our Desires of *Eternity*, and bury them, as it were, in a sweet Oblivion; how often do you hear it Read and Preach'd? Thus saith the Lord, this is the Commandment of the Lord, but you neglect it as often as you hear it. The Lord may say and command what He pleases, but we will gratifie our sensual Inclinations. *We will walk after our own* Jer 18. *Devices, and we will every one do the Imagination* 12, 13. *of his evil Heart. Therefore thus saith the Lord, ask ye now among the Heathen, who hath heard such Things? Wou'd this People, who were destitute of the Knowledge of God, have contemn'd Eternity if they had known it? Go to now, Ye simple Ones, ye Fools, and Scorners that* Prov. 1. 24. *delight in scorning; because I have call'd and ye* 25, 26, 27. *refus'd, I have stretch'd out my Hand and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and wou'd none of my Reproof; I will also laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when distress and anguish and all Eternity cometh upon you. Shou'd Death take us away in so deplorable a State, what Hopes cou'd we have of Mercy? The dreadful Sentence is already past, and there is no recalling it; the Gate of Life is shut upon us, we may cry unto him, Lord,* Matt. 25. *Lord, open to us, but he shall answer and say,* 11, 12, 41. *I know you not, depart from me ye cursed into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

Watch ye therefore, good Christians, Watch and Pray; behold the Judge stands at the Gate, and that may happen in a Moment,
which

Pfalm 90.
10.

which may be Matter of Grief and Sorrow to all *Eternity*. *Anthony* call'd *the Great*, who was the first that prescrib'd the Rules of a retir'd Life, in one of his Sermons to the People, has these Words; Dearly Beloved, saith he, in our mutual Contracts and Dealings with one another, we are generally very careful to proportion the Value of the Goods, which we buy or sell to the Money which we give or receive for them. For instance, you pay me Ten Ducats, and in Exchange I give you their Value in Spices. Again, I pay you Ten Pounds, and in lieu of them I receive as many Quarters of Wheat: But in Relation to *Eternity*, we act quite otherwise; nay, we are unwilling to Exchange Things Temporal for Things Eternal: Eternal Life is of little or no Value in the Esteem of the World, we do not Care to purchase it at any Price, and can hardly be perswaded to do any Thing to obtain it. And yet what is all our Labour, if compar'd with *Eternity*? It is not so much as a Penny to a Million, so vastly Superiour is the Recompence of the other World to all our greatest Labours and Hardships, that they bear no manner of Proportion to it. *The Days of our Age are Threescore Tears and Ten, and tho' Men be so strong, that they come to Fourscore Tears; yet is their Strength then but Labour and Sorrow, so soon passeth it away and we are gone.* Suppose we then a Man to have liv'd Fourscore, or if you please, an Hundred Years, and to have serv'd God all that Time in the Sincerity of his Heart, and with Love unfeign'd; is not *Eternity* an ample Compensation? Hath he not spent his Life to good Purpose, when his Reward is no less

less than a Kingdom? I do not mean a Kingdom in which he shall Reign an Hundred Years only, in Proportion to the Time of his Service here on Earth; No! His Kingdom, like that of our Saviour's is not of this World, the Kingdom of Heaven is given to Him for an Inheritance, where he shall live and reign in Glory for ever and ever. Wherefore, my beloved Children, let not Ambition rob you of yourselves, it is a delightful but dangerous Passion, the more you give way to it, the more it will inflame you; neither be ye weary with Well-doing, nor dejected with the Evils and Calamities of this Life, but rather rejoice, *that ye are counted worthy to suffer; for, as St. Paul rightly observes, The Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory, which shall be reveal'd in us:* Let not any Man therefore, when he has taken his leave of the World, and bid Farewel to all his Greatness, be so vain as to imagine, that he has abandon'd any mighty Matter; for what are all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and the Glory thereof, in Comparison of Heaven? They are, at the most, but as a Centre to its Circle, or as a drop of Water to the vast great Ocean. And what are Riches? Are they not a very uncertain Possession? But supposing that we cou'd keep them, such are the unchangeable Laws of Nature, that in a little while, whether we will or no, we shall be taken from them. If this be the Case, why do we not make a Vertue of Necessity, and Sacrifice our Wealth to the Relief of the Poor, and Indigent, when Eternal Life is promis'd to those, who make so sweet and pleasing an Oblation.

Acts 5. 41.

Rom 8. 18.

It

It was a constant Practice with *Pachomius*, whenever any loose, lascivious Thoughts sprang up in his Mind, to repel them with the remembrance of *Eternity*; if they sprang up a second Time, he repell'd them a second Time with the remembrance of *Eternity*, with reflecting on the endless Torments of Hell, with reflecting on the Fire that will never be quench'd, and on the Worm that never Dies. I will therefore conclude this Consideration in the Words of *Pachomius*; *Above all Things*, saith he, *let us preserve in our remembrance the last great Day; and let us always live in fear of the Torments of Hell, that by the Mercy of God, in and thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ our Blessed Saviour and Redeemer, we may for ever escape them.*

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Fig. 9.

2. Pet. Ch. 3. v. 18.



To Him be Glory both now
and for ever Amen. —

THE NINTH
CONSIDERATION
UPON
ETERNITY.

*Several Conclusions drawn from the
preceding Considerations.*

The First Conclusion.

E*ternity* can neither be express'd nor conceiv'd; Words are not big enough, and Thought is too narrow to comprehend it. There is a mighty Difference between a real Man, and one that is painted, between real

John 15.
6.

real Fire, and Fire in a Picture, and yet in some Degree, they may very properly be said to resemble each other: But between the Fire of Earth and Hell, between the Pains of this Life and the next, there is no Comparison; and the Reason is plain, the Fire and Pains of the one are Finite, the other are Infinite. This is very elegantly intimated unto us by our Blessed Saviour in the Parable of the Vine-branch; *If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch that is wither'd; and Men gather them, (or, and is gather'd) and cast them into the Fire, and they are burned, (Gr. and is burn'd.)* This is a very short and lively Description of *Eternity*; for, observe if you please, that the Words do not run in the Future, but in the Present Tense: Our Saviour does not say, *He shall be cast forth as a Branch, and shall wither, and that Men shall gather it, and cast it into the Fire, and it shall be burnt*: But, *he is cast forth as a Branch that is wither'd, and Men gather it, and cast it into the Fire, and it is burnt*. This is the Condition of those miserable Wretches, who suffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, they are *always burning*. When a Thousand Years are gone and past, *they burn*; let another Thousand fly away, *they burn*; their Torments are the same, as at the beginning; and if after several Millions of Years some curious Person shou'd desire to know, how it is with them, whether their Condition is not alter'd for the better? Or, whether they find no Abatement of their Pains? No other Answer can be given than this, they are *always burning*, even Time which changes all Things, changes not their Pains, they are one and the same for ever and ever. This, faith

saith St. *Augustin* in his Comment upon this Text, is the Condition of the Vine-branch, it must abide in the Vine or turn in the Fire, if not in the Vine then in the Fire; but that it may not burn in the Fire, let it abide in the Vine.

The Second Conclusion.

IF they, who are Sinners, did but seriously consider how near they are to the Confines of Eternity, and that they are just dropping down, as it were, into the Pit of Destruction; did they but consider, how that God in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, can deliver them up to Death and Hell, from whence there is no Redemption; they wou'd not delay their Repentance for an Hour, tho' they were to have the Riches of the *Indies*, *Spain*, *Asia*, and even the Treasures of the whole World itself, upon such a Condition; much less wou'd they dare to go to Bed, before they had ask'd God's Pardon and Forgiveness for their past Offences. *For what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Whatever* Matt. 16. 27. thou lovest, O Man, take care of thy Soul, so that be preserv'd, all other Losses are inconsiderable; I need not here relate the Sufferings of the Martyrs in the first Ages of the Church; they are recorded to all Posterity, and their
Names

Heb. 12.
6.

Names shall be had in Everlasting Remembrance: They endur'd the severest and most cruel Persecutions, that they might save their Souls; they cheerfully follow'd our Saviour to the Cross, and by laying down their Life for his sake, may truly and properly in the Gospel-sense be said to have sav'd it. Let us therefore while we have Time, saith St. *Augustin*, amend our Lives and correct our Manners, that those terrible Judgments which God has denounc'd against the Wicked and Impenitent, may not fall upon us; not because we shall not be, but that we may not be found to be such as they are, on whom these dreadful Threatnings shall be executed. Whatsoever is written in the Holy Scriptures is written for our Learning, 'tis the Voice of God, and we must obey it; we must look upon the Sufferings, and Afflictions of this Life as the chastening of the Almighty, as the Effects of his Love and Kindness to us, *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*; He corrects us here, that He may not condemn us with the Wicked hereafter. Why then are we afraid of the Afflictions of this Life, which are but for a Moment? Why do our Hearts sink down within us, when by Accident we hear a Relation of them? If we wou'd but consider Things aright, we shou'd then confess, that the most grievous and painful Tribulations which befall us here, are even as nothing in Comparison of what shall be hereafter.

The Third Conclusion.

There are a great many Christians, who neither believe a Heaven, nor a Hell; if they did, they would not dare to lead such profligate Lives, as most of them do: To such we may apply that Saying of our Saviour, *When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith upon the Earth.* There are some indeed who pretend to believe them, but their Words and Actions do not agree together, what they affirm in the one, they contradict in the other. They seldom or never think upon *Eternity*, if at any Time they allow it a Place in their Thoughts, 'tis in a very flight and cursory Manner; they never suffer it to stay upon their Minds, neither do they examine and weigh it as they ought; their Will and Understanding are not dispos'd for so serious a Meditation, and they do not take Care to fix 'em upon it, and this is the Reason, that the Impressions which *Eternity* makes upon their Minds are so weak and feeble. As soon as they set about it, their Thoughts wander somewhere else, and if by Chance some Sparks of Goodness spring up in their Hearts, what thro' Cares and Business, what thro' the Pleasures and Vanities of the World, they are presently extinguish'd. Thus with Eyes shut, and Ears stopt up, having no

N Appre-

Luke 16.
23.

Job 7 9.

Apprehensions of the Danger they are in, they go on in the way to Eternal Death. The Fathers observe of the Rich Man in the Gospel, that he never open'd his Eyes till he was in Torment; he had kept them shut all his Life-long, and had stupidly pass'd away his Days without one serious Thought or Consideration: He was utterly averse to Piety and Goodness, and had no Mercy, no Compassion for the Poor; but when he came to Hell, then he was awaken'd and began to consider, but it was then too late, *In Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torments.* But we need not wonder, that so many Sinners do so blindly and stupidly run on in a wicked Course, and never open their Eyes till they are fall'n into the Pit; for the Way is extremely Large and Pleasant, 'tis so Broad and Smooth, that a Man cannot possibly lose himself, till he comes to the end of it: Then indeed he perceives, that he has all along been out of the right Way, but it is too late to retrieve his Error, there is no going back again. There are a great many, who wou'd like very well to walk in this broad delightful Way, if there were no End of it; 'tis this that terrifies them; and therefore they very wisely choose to tread the rough unbeaten Path which leads to the Regions of Light and Happiness, rather than walk thro' a sweet delicious Paradise, to Death, and Destruction: *For as the Cloud is consum'd and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the Grave shall come up no more.*

The Fourth Conclusion.

HE that seriously considers *Eternity*, and suffers it to dwell and take Root in his Mind, will not only refrain from a loose and wanton Way of Living, but will also take Care so to limit his Mirth, that he do not strain it to too great a Degree. It was observ'd of those who were rais'd from the Dead, and particularly of *Lazarus* of *Bethany*, our Saviour's Friend, whom he so dearly loved, that they were seldom seen to laugh; so that they might very truly and justly apply that Saying of *Solomon* to themselves, *I said of Laughter it is mad; and of Mirth what doth it?* Eccles 2. 2. *Cyril of Alexandria* tells us, that he was very fearful of giving himself up to immoderate Laughter; "I am afraid, saith he, of Hell, because it has no End; and I am no less afraid of the devouring Worm, because it never dies. *O that they* Deut 32. *were wise, that they understood this, that they* 29. *would consider their latter End!* This I must affirm, and what I say is undeniably true, That, if the Man who contemplates *Eternity*, does not lead a Devout and Holy Life; if so powerful and weighty a Consideration does not oblige him to reform his Ways, and correct his Manners, either he has no Faith, or if he has Faith, he has a stupid senseless Heart,

which may not improperly be said to be Dead, even while he lives.

The Fifth Conclusion.

Nothing is more certain than that in all Discourses upon *Eternity*, we can never say too much; for tho' in other Matters, we are very apt to over-flourish an Object, and to paint it out in our Imaginations much greater than it really is, yet when we speak of *Eternity* the Case is otherwise; since it is not in the Power of the most enlarg'd and elevated Imagination to raise and improve it, to too great a height. It is the peculiar Property of *Eternity*, that as by Subtraction you cannot take from it, so neither by Addition can you add to it: Suppose you were to take from it as many Years as there are Stars in the Firmament, Drops in the Ocean, Spires of Grass in the Field, Motes in the Sun, or Atoms of Sand upon the Sea-shore; if you cast up the Remainder, you will find that *Eternity* is still the same, as it was before you made this Deduction. So likewise, if you add so many Years to it, it is all to the same Purpose, *Eternity* is neither more nor less, it is still what it was take what Measures you will, it is equally impossible either to lessen or improve it.

As

As long as God shall continue in Being, so long shall the Damn'd continue in Torment: I have already illustrated this Truth by several apt and proper Resemblances, and yet I cannot forbear to add one more, which is taken out of *Bonaventure*. If one of the Damn'd were to shed a Tear every Hundred Years, and the Tears thus shed were to be kept together, till they made a Sea as large as the Ocean; how many Millions of Years may we reasonably suppose to pass away, before this tedious Effusion of Tears wou'd make a little River, and what is a River to the vast great Ocean? And yet if this cou'd possibly be done, we might then truly say, now begins *Eternity*. Suppose we then, that another River or Sea was to be produc'd from these Centenary Tears, yet even then, when that was collected, we might as justly say, as we did before, now begins *Eternity*, and thus we might proceed *ad Infinitum*; nor let any one doubt of the Truth of this Assertion, since nothing is more certain, than that there is no Proportion between Finite and Infinite. This may probably seem very strange and incredible to us, because our Imagination is not able to conceive it; it is so remote that we cannot pursue it, and how can we hope to penetrate that, whose Nature is Infinite and consequently Impenetrable. And this, I dare say, is one of the Reasons, why our Intellectual Faculty is so very averse to consider *Eternity*; because it blushes and is asham'd, and disdains, as it were, to tire itself with searching after that which cannot be comprehended. But we must not suffer our Modesty to prevail upon us in

this Matter, we must force and compel our Understanding to be conversant about it; for tho' we cannot find it out to Perfection, yet if we daily Exercise our Minds in meditating on these, and the like Emblems and Representations, which we have of it, we shall never do amiss: This is certain and beyond all Controversie, that we cannot exceed in our Enquiries after it; for when we have imagin'd as many Millions of Years as the Mind of Man can possibly conceive, we are still vastly short of the Measure of *Eternity*.

The Prophet *Daniel*, that he might the better imprint upon our Minds the infinite unbounded Extension of *Eternity*, expresses himself in the following Manner; *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.* By this Declaration he ingenuously insinuates, that no Words are sufficient to explain the Nature of *Eternity*; I am sensible, that there remains much more to be said upon this Subject, and I can say no more. In this we may observe the Prophet's Repetition; he thought that *one for ever* was not enough to enforce what he wou'd say, and therefore he repeats it, *for ever and ever*. If we shou'd multiply the *great Year*, or *Years*, a Thousand Times, the Sum wou'd bear no Proportion to *Eternity*. *Astronomers* tell us, that the Motion of the *Eighth Sphere* is so very slow, that tho' it is daily wheel'd about by the rapid Motion of the *Primum Mobile*, yet it finishes its proper Circuit but once in Thirty-six Thousand Years; this space of Time is usually call'd the *Great Year*,
or

or the *Platonick Year*, and yet all this, is but a Moment, or even nothing in Comparison of *Eternity*. It is a true and just Observation of *Boethius*, that there is a nearer Proportion and Resemblance between a Moment and Ten Thousand Years, than between Ten Thousand Years and *Eternity*. Little Children, saith *St. John*, ^{1 John 2. 18.} *It is the last Time, or the last Hour*, and this was said near Seventeen Hundred Years ago, so true is that excellent Saying of *St. Augustin*, that every Thing that has an End is short, but *Eternity* has no End. ^{Col. 3. 2.} Let us therefore set our Affections upon Things above, not on Things on the Earth; let us Love *Eternity*, and make *Christ* the Ultimate End of our Desires; that ^{Ver. 4.} when *Christ, who is* (the Author and Purchaser of) our Life shall appear, we may also appear with him in Glory.

The Sixth Conclusion.

IT is hardly to be believ'd, that any Man who has enjoy'd the Happy Advantage of a Religious Education, and has not forgot those important Principles, which in his tender Years were inculcated upon him, shou'd be so far led away by his impetuous and ungovernable Passions, (unless he has laid aside his Humanity, and made himself like a Brute-beast, and sacrific'd his Reason to his sensual Appetites;

for as *Solomon* observes, the Libertine and Presumptuous Sinners, even when they are almost swallow'd up in the deep Pit, into which they have foolishly plung'd themselves, are so far from being concern'd at their Calamity, that they do but laugh at it :) I say, It is hardly credible, that any Man who has imbib'd the Principles of Religion, shou'd be so far led away by his Head strong Passions, but if he will allow himself some Time, tho' it be once a Week, to meditate upon *Eternity*, He will soon purge out his old Leaven of Wickedness, and make himself a kind of New-Creature, and be quite another Man than he was before. If before, he was Proud, and of a Passionate Temper, now he is Humble, Lowly and Modest, he is Kind and Gentle, and easie to be intreated: Was he given to voluptuousness? Who is now more Chaste and Continent than he? Was he Intemperate? Who is now more remarkable for his great Sobriety? He will now become not in appearance only, but in Mind and Heart, a truly sincere and pious Man. He will not rashly and without Deliberation, pass on a sudden from one extreme to another, such speedy Changes being seldom lasting; but will duly and maturely weigh all Things with himself, and by this Means he will accustom his Mind to think upon *Eternity*; nay, he will delight to dwell upon it; he will often make this Reflection to himself, that *Eternity* will never have an End, that it will last to infinite, innumerable, incomprehensible Ages, and that its Duration will never cease. If we thus seriously and closely, and attentively contemplate *Eternity*, we shall quickly Experience the happy Effects
of

of it; we must ruminate upon it, and suffer it, in some Sense, to digest, as we do our Meat. Physicians tell us, that tho' the Food we eat be never so good and wholesome in itself, yet if it be not duly prepar'd and digested, it is so far from affording us any Nourishment, that it Corrupts and Poysons the whole Mass of Blood, and is consequently productive of many Diseases; it continues indeed some Time in the Body, but the Juice which comes from it is very pernicious. In like manner, the Consideration of Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell, but especially of *Eternity*, is extremely Beneficial; but as the Nourishment of our Bodies depends upon the good Digestion of our Meat, so is it with our Souls, whose well-Being depends upon the constant and settled Application of our Minds to these excellent Things. We must lay aside all corroding Cares, we must call our Thoughts home, and withdraw ourselves, and our carnal Affections from the Vanities of this Life; being thus retir'd from the Noise of the World, from all Occasions and Temptations to Sin, we must call upon the Powers and Faculties of our Souls to refresh themselves with the remembrance of *Eternity*. Unless this be done, all other Means will be to no Purpose; our hearing and reading of the Holy Scripture will be useless and unserviceable. There are many who employ a great Part of their Time in hearing and reading of pious Sermons, but the misfortune is, they are little or nothing the better for them, by their not-allowing themselves Time to reflect upon what they have heard or read; by which Means it often happens, that all those excellent Precepts and

and Admonitions, which wou'd otherwise have been very serviceable to them in the Conduct of their Lives, are entirely forgotten, before they have an Opportunity of putting them in Practice. If then we wou'd read and hear with Advantage, we must be careful so to meditate upon what we hear or read, that it may abide upon our Hearts and stay always with us, that our Wills may be form'd and modell'd by it: This was the Practice of the Blessed Virgin the Mother of our Lord, let us follow her pious and admirable Example, who, as the Scriptures tell us, *Kept all these Things and ponder'd them in her Heart.*

Luke 2. 19.

The Seventh Conclusion.

THere are few who believe, or at least who duly weigh and consider these celebrated Words of our Saviour Christ, *Enter ye in at the strait Gate, for wide is the Gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to Destruction; and many there be which go in therout, because strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* This Advice is again repeated in St. Luke's Gospel, *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* Whosoever, saith St. Augustin, despises these Things, and will not believe them because they are

Matt. 7.
13, 14.

Luke 13.
24.

are not visible to him, when those Things come to pass which he would not believe, shall blush and be in the utmost Confusion to see himself separated from the Blessed, and not only separated, but to have his Portion with the Workers of Iniquity.

A certain Woman, saith *Hieronymus Plantus*, hearing *Bertoldus*, a very eminent and powerful Preacher, inveigh bitterly against a Sin, of which she knew herself to be guilty, fell down Dead; but after a while being brought to Life again by the pious Prayers of the Congregation, she gave them an Account of what she had seen in her Trance, which was to this Effect. I stood, said she, before God's Tribunal together with Sixty Thousand Souls, who were summon'd from all the Parts of the Universe to appear before the Judge, and they were all Sentenc'd to Eternal Death, Three only excepted.

We need not I think give ourselves any Trouble about the Truth of this Relation, since our Blessed Saviour does so solemnly affirm the very same Thing. *Wide is the Gate and broad* Matt. 7.
is the way that leadeth to Destruction, and many 13, 14.
there be that go in thereat; but strait is the Gate,
and narrow is the way that leadeth unto Life, and
few there be that find it. It might seem indeed astonishing to us, that a God of Infinite Mercy and Goodness, should pass so severe and dreadful a Sentence against so many Thousand miserable Creatures, did not the Consideration of his violated Majesty, the inexpressible Malice of Sin, and the many clear and undeniable Proofs which are contain'd in
the

Matt. 25.
41.
Pſalm 50.
22.

the Scriptures, incline us to believe it. It was this Consideration which made *Job* to tremble; he calls the State which ſhall be hereafter, *A Land of Darkneſs as Darkneſs itſelf, and of the Shadow of Death, without any Order, and where the Light is as Darkneſs*; or as the *Latin* expreſſes it; *where is no Order, and where Everlaſting Horror dwelleth*. Agreeable to which are the Words of our Saviour, *Depart from me ye Cursed into Everlaſting Fire*. O conſider this ye that forget God, leſt he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you. Let us waſh away our Sins by Repentance, while the Opportunities of Life are before us, for there is no Redemption from the *Land of Darkneſs, where is no Order, and where Everlaſting Horror dwelleth*. No Redemption! What a fearful and amazing Conſideration is this? Whatever Senſe we have of it now, when we come into the other World, we ſhall be convinc'd of the Truth of it by a ſenſible Demonſtration; and as there is no Redemption to be expected, ſo neither muſt we hope for any Conſolation. Shou'd any one of thoſe miſerable Wretches, who lie wallowing and frying in Everlaſting Flames, intreat for one drop of Water to cool him, all his intreaties wou'd be in vain. If they who enjoy God's Grace and Favour, and have good Expectations of being Happy hereafter, wou'd ſeriously conſider from what an Eternal Scene of Miſery, they ſhall be deliver'd at the Day of Judgment, and the unconceivable immortal Pleaſures, into which at that Time they ſhall alſo be admitted, they wou'd not let an Hour paſs before they wou'd bid farewel to the World, and to all its falſe and flattering Vanities; they wou'd

would leave the Dead to converse with the Dead, they would abandon the World, to be enjoy'd by those who had no Taste of Spiritual Enjoyments; they would Dedicate themselves to the Duties of Religion, and would employ the Remainder of their Days in singing the Praises of their great Creator, and in paying him their humble and sincere Acknowledgments for the Assurance he has given them, of their being deliver'd from the Terrors of Hell, and for their Hopes, their certain Hopes of a Blessed Resurrection to Life Everlasting. St. Gregory observes, that the more Men neglect to consider the Joys which shall be reveal'd hereafter, the more uneasy they are under the Calamities of this Life; we think them extremely painful and grievous, because we will not be persuaded to lift up our Eyes to Heaven, and to *have Respect to the Recompence of Reward.* Heb. 11. 26. But when the Mind begins to raise itself aloft to the Contemplation of Heavenly Things, it despises the little Sufferings of this Life, and thinks every Thing, that has an End, to be very inconsiderable. Joy in Tribulation, saith the same great Man, is as a Song in the Night; for tho' we are afflicted with Temporal Evils, yet we Rejoice and Triumph in our Hopes of Everlasting Felicity.

St. *Augustin* Reasons much after the same Manner; if we would attend, saith he, to those good Things which God has prepar'd for them that love him, we shou'd reckon the Sufferings of this present Time to be vile and contemptible, and not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory, Rom. 8. 18. which shall be reveal'd in us. My Brethren, saith

saith he, if ye were to undergo Eternal Labour for Eternal Rest, the Balance wou'd be even; but if ye were to endure Eternal Labour, when cou'd you enjoy Eternal Rest? And therefore it is necessary, that your Tribulations shou'd be only for a Time, that when they end, *an Entrance may be minister'd unto us abundantly into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Put a Thousand Years in the Balance against Eternity, put in Ten Thousand, a Hundred Thousand or what you will, they are all too Light. Let it be further consider'd, that our Calamities are not only for a Time, but that they are likewise of

Gen. 47. 9. *a short Duration; The Days of our Pilgrimage are very few* And therefore, tho' a Man were to suffer Afflictions all the Days of his Life, without any spark or glimmering of Comfort; were he to endure Stripes and Imprisonment, Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Nakedness, without any Intermision, even to the very Moment of his Dissolution, yet notwithstanding all this,

Job 14. 2. *the Time of his Sufferings is but short; Man that is born of a Woman, saith Job, is of few Days;* his Labour is Light and Short, it will quickly have an End, and then he shall inherit an Everlasting Kingdom, where is true and pure unmingled Joy for evermore; then, as St.

Luke 20. *Luke and St. Paul observe, We shall be equal to*
 36. *the Angels, Heirs of God, and joint-Heirs with*
 Rom. 8. *Christ;* our Labour is indeed little, but our
 17. *Reward is exceeding great.*

St. *Augustin* tells us in another Place, that

Rom. 11. *the Thoughts of God are very deep; O the*
 33, 34. *depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Know-*
 ledge

ledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? He lets his Reins loose for the present, but he will in a little Time draw them in. Be not like the Fish, who rejoices and plays up and down the Water with the Bait in his Mouth; the Fisher can draw him in at Pleasure, the fatal Hook is fasten'd in his Jaws. The Time which seems long and tedious unto thee, is in reality but very short; Alas! What are our Days in Comparifon of Eternity? Wou'dst thou be Patient and Long-suffering? Remember, O remember the Years of Eternity. Dost thou consider, *That God has* Psalm 39. *made thy Days as a Hand breadth?* And canst thou expect, that all Things shou'd be accomplish'd in so scanty a Space? That the Wicked shou'd be thrust into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God, and that the Righteous shou'd be Crown'd with Diadems of Glory? The Eternal God, who lives for ever, will in his good Time fulfil his Work, but he is slow to Wrath, he is Patient and Long-suffering. To this you reply, that I am not Long-suffering, because not *Eternal*; join your Heart to God's Eternity, and you shall also be *Eternal*. If thou art a good Christian, and train'd up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, thou wilt then Confess, that God has reserv'd all Things against the Day of Judgment; that the Good mourn and are afflicted in this Life, because God chastens and corrects them as his Children; and that the Wicked Rejoice and Triumph, because God has left them to follow the Imaginations of their Evil Hearts, and has abandon'd

don'd and rejected them as Aliens. A certain Man has Two Sons, he chastens the one, and leaves the other to act as he pleases; the one is sure of being corrected upon every slight and trivial Transgression, but tho' the other is guilty of all Manner of Extravagancies, yet he escapes unpunish'd. Now what is the Reason of this different Proceeding? Are they not both his Sons? Is he not equally a Father to them both? Why is he then so severe to the one, and so indulgent to the other? What Reason I say, can possibly be given of so unequal a Conduct, unless it be, that the Father designs the Son whom he corrects to be his Heir; but as for the other, he has long since thrown him off and disinherited him, he despairs of doing him any Good, and therefore he does not give himself any Trouble about him. Notwithstanding all this intended Kindness, he that is corrected, not having Prudence and Judgment enough to discern the Motives of his Fathers Actions, congratulates his Brothers Happy Condition, who is never beaten do what he will; but as for himself, poor unhappy Youth, he is sure to suffer for every little Violation of his Duty: He, I say, who is thus corrected, unless God has given him an Understanding Heart, to see and know what is most for his Good, will be sure to complain after this manner. My Brother enjoys an uncontrollable Liberty, he drinks to Excess, takes his Pleasures, is Voluptuous and Intemperate, and yet my Father never rebukes him; but if at any Time I go abroad with my Companions, or if in other Matters I offend in the least, I am sure to feel the Effects of his Displeasure. So unwise

wife and foolish is he, that he only considers his present Sufferings, and has no Regard to that fair Inheritance which his severe yet merciful Father has provided for him.

Give me leave to proceed in the Words of St. *Augustin*; How great and wonderful is the Mercy of God? How astonishing is his Goodness? He does not say to Man, labour thou Ten Hundred Thousand Years; He does not say, labour thou One Thousand or Five Hundred Years; but labour whilst thou livest, and thou shalt have Eternal Rest. Consider then, that thy labours are but for a few Years, nor are they without their Consolations; not one Day shall pass without some Comfort; if thou grieveest in the Night, joy cometh in the Morning. But do not rejoice after the Manner of the World; *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice*, rejoice in Christ, rejoice in his Word, and let his Law be thy Delight. True is that Saying of the Apostle St. Paul, *Our Light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*. Consider then, what is the Price of thy Labour, and how great is thy Reward; thy Labours are only for a few Days, and when they are past, thy Rest is Everlasting. Hast thou Joy for a Time? Do not depend too much upon it. Hast thou Grief and Sorrow? Do not Despair. Be not elated with Prosperity, neither be dejected with Adversity; God has promis'd unto thee Eternal Happiness, therefore Contemn all worldly Felicity; he has threatned Everlasting Fire, therefore Contemn all Temporal Afflictions.

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I will conclude all in the Words of the same Divine Author; Let us learn from hence to love and value Life *Eternal*; and let us likewise learn, how much we ought to labour for it. We cannot but observe, how fond Men are of this present Life, which must shortly have an End; how that upon the least Indisposition, so terrible and amazing is the fear of Death, they do all they can, and neglect no Means to put it afar off, tho' they cannot prevent it; how when Death approaches, they endeavour to hide and conceal themselves from him, and are willing to part with all that they have to purchase their Redemption. They immediately send in haste for the Physician, and are ready to endure the most exquisite Pains to preserve that Life, which by the unalterable Law of Nature, cannot long be continued to them. We cannot, I say, but observe, how willing Men are to Part with their Substance, and to endure the most violent Pains to preserve a Life which will shortly have an End, and yet they will do nothing to live for ever. Consider we with ourselves, if Men are so solicitous to send for a Physician, to part with their Substance and all that is most dear to them, and to undergo the severest Remedies, in Hopes of living a few Days longer, what Pains, what Labours, ought we not to suffer for Life Everlasting? If then they deservedly are accounted wise, who leave no Ways and Means unattempted, to prolong their Life for the sake of a few Days? What a prodigious Folly are they guilty of, who live in such a manner as to lose the Possession of a joyful *Eternity*.

Consider

Consider this, O ye Mortal Men, before ye enter into a State of Everlasting Happiness or Misery! Consider and bring it again to Mind, O ye Transgressors! Make haste and improve the present Hour of Repentance, and provide for *Eternity*; all other Things soon will pass away, but *Eternity* alone remains for ever.

CHAP. I.

The Punishment of Eternal Death.

THE *Messenians* had a Dungeon which they call'd the *Treasury*, a Place that was destitute both of Air and Light, it had only one Mouth in stead of Doors, at which the Prisoners were let down by a Rope, which was clos'd with a great Stone; into this *Treasury* they cast *Philopæmen* the Great General of the *Achæans*, who was poyson'd in the Night by the Command of *Dinocrates*.

See the Life of Philopæmen in Plutarch.

We read in the History of *Paulus Jovius*, that *Attiolinus* the Tyrant of *Padua* had several loathsome horrible Prisons, which were so infamous for the great Variety of Tortures which were exercis'd therein, that they who were cast into them, look'd upon Death as their greatest Happiness; the sooner he came, the more wel-

come he was to these miserable Wretches. They were laden with Irons, starv'd with Hunger, poison'd with Stench, eaten up with Vermin; in this manner they died a ling'ring Death, that they might perceive themselves to die. He was justly accounted the happiest among them, who died the soonest; and indeed their Punishment was worse than Death; vast heaps of dead Bodies lay putrifying together, which was so dismal and noisom a Spectacle, that it might be truly affirm'd without a Figure, that the Dead were the Destruction of the Living.

But the worst of these Prisons is a kind of *Paradise*, in respect of Hell. 'Tis true, the Misery which the Captives languish'd under in *Actiolinus's* Dungeon was exceeding great, but it was tolerable, because it cou'd last no longer than this Life, they were sure of being delivered by Death; but they who dwell in Everlasting Burnings have no Hopes of a Deliverance, they must always live, and live in Pain. As no Man can conceive, saith *Cassiodorus*, what it is to enjoy an Eternal Recompence, so neither can he truly apprehend, what it is, to be tormented for ever.

The *Persians* had a Prison which they call'd *Lethe*, the Entrance into which was extremely easie, but the coming out was hardly possible; this is a perfect Resemblance of Hell, the Way thither is plain and easie, but to return is absolutely impossible: It may therefore very properly be term'd *Lethe* or *Oblivion*, for God is so unmindful of the Damn'd, that He will never restore them to Grace, nor receive them in-

to Mercy. There are Two Reasons, saith a Learned Writer, why Hell is call'd the Land of Forgetfulness, because, they, that are there, have no Remembrance of God for their Good; alas! Poor Wretches, they remember nothing but what aggravates their Misery. The other Reason which he gives is this, that God has forgotten to be gracious to them, and that He will never send his Holy Angels to be their Comfort and Consolation. *Between us and you,* Luke 16.

said Abraham to Dives, there is a great Gulf 26.
fix'd, so that they which wou'd pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that wou'd come from thence. O fearful Gulf! O tremendous Eternity! These are the Eternal Mansions

which the Wicked and Ungodly prepare for themselves. We read in the Gospel, *That the* Luke 16.
Rich Man died and was buried, and in Hell he 22, 23.
lift up his Eyes being in Torments, and seeth A-

braham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom: Who is this that lies in Torments? Even that very Rich Man, who, while he liv'd had no Compassion for the miserable *Lazarus*, who was so hard-hearted, that he refus'd him the Crums which fell from his Table; but how is he chang'd from what he was? How strangely is his Condition alter'd? In stead of a lofty Bed of Down, on which he was wont to repose himself, he now lies Frying in the Flames; his sparkling Wine and delicious Dainties are taken from him, he is burnt up with Thirst, and has nothing for his Food but Smoke and Sulphur; he is no longer delighted with Singing and Dancing, and the Charms of sweet Harmony, but is Misery and Despair itself.

Ezek. 20.
 46, 47. It was a short but terrible Speech which God made to Ezekiel his Prophet, saying, *Son of Man, set thy Face toward the South, and drop thy Word toward the South, and Propheſie againſt the Forest of the South-field, and ſay to the Forest of the South, Hear the Word of the Lord, thus ſaith the Lord God, behold I will kindle a Fire in thee, and it ſhall devour every Green Tree in thee, and every Dry Tree: The flaming Flame ſhall not be quenched, and all Faces from the South to the North ſhall be burnt therein. How many Tall and lofty Cedars? How many wicked and ungodly Men wax green and flouriſh and proſper in the World, and have Riches in Poſſeſſion, but are withered and dry for want of Goodneſs? Hear me therefore, O ye green and dry Trees! A Fire ſhall be kindled, ſaith the Lord, and the flame thereof ſhall not be quenched. Hear me, ye that make ſuch haſte to Hell; the Flame thereof will never ceaſe, it will burn for ever without any Intermiſſion. There is Eternal Grief, Eternal Death, Eternal Lamentation, without the leaſt intervening Comfort; there is no cloſing of the Eyes to ſleep, there is no ſuch Thing as reſt in Hell; your Being is continued that your Pain may be endleſs, you will never be permitted to Die, that you may be always dying. The Wicked, ſaith St. Auguſtin, ſhall live in never-ceaſing Torments; they call upon Death to put an End to their Life and Miſery together, but he will not hear. It is very obſervable, that the Scriptures, when ſpeaking of the deplorable Condition of the Damned in Hell, do never call it Life, it being uſual with the ſacred Writers to expreſs the greateſt and*

Palm 73.
 12.

and most excellent Blessings by that Name; and since it cannot be suppos'd a Blessing to exist in a State of Everlasting Torments, the Scriptures call it *the Second Death*, by which they understand an Eternal Duration of the most exquisite Wo and Misery, which succeeds that common natural Death, to which all Men are subject. How then can it properly be call'd Death, seeing they who are under its Condemnation are not bereav'd of Sense, but are lengthen'd out to Deathless Pains? 'Tis without Doubt extremely Difficult, or indeed hardly Possible, expressly to affirm what it is, for as they who groan and languish under it, cannot properly be said to Die, so neither can they properly be said to Live. Life and Misery are inconsistent, in what Sense can they be said to Live, who never see a Day of Comfort, and can never Hope for it? For as Life is the Foundation of our Felicity, so in the Language of the Scriptures, as I before observ'd, it is always understood to signify Happiness, and that Happiness must be Eternal. Agreeable to which is another Passage in the same Father; If the Soul, says he, be in a Deluge of Liquid, unexhausted Fire, in which all impure Spirits are suppos'd to be tormented, it ought rather to be call'd Eternal Death, than Eternal Life, because no Death can be greater or worse, than such a Living-Death, or indeed, in any Degree, equal to so tremendous a Punishment.

The Testimony of St. *Gregory* is much the same; In Hell, saith he, there shall be Death without Death, an End without End, because Death always Lives, and the End is always Be-

ginning. The same is likewise affirm'd by *Innocent*, Death, saith he, shall there be immortal; O Death how much sweeter wou'dst thou be to those that are in Misery, if thou wou'dst take away Life, and not compel them to remain in Being. But so it is, the Years of an *Eternity* of Torments cannot be number'd; 'tis beyond the reach of the most able Accountant; even God Himself whose Knowledge is Infinite, cannot determine the End thereof. When a Thousand, Thousand Millions of Years are past and gone, there are still as many more to come; and when they are past, there remains still a greater Number, and when these are likewise past, you are still as far from coming to an End, as you were at first. Five Thousand Years are already past, since *Cain*, who slew his Brother *Abel*, was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and yet his Punishment is still the same as if he was but just thrown in; it is not abated or diminish'd in the least, he must suffer another Five Thousand Years, and afterwards a Third, and when Millions and Millions of Years are past, his Torments will be the very same, both in Respect of their Degree and Duration, as if they were now Commencing: And tho' the *Rich Man in the Gospel* has already been in Hell near Two Thousand Years, yet the Torments he endures are still the same, and will always be so. He desir'd *Abraham* to send *Lazarus*, That he might dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool his Tongue; but *Abraham* did not grant his Request, nay, tho' he shou'd still continue to repeat it, all his Intreaties wou'd be still in vain.

Luke 16.
24.

We

We deride and scorn these Things when we hear them; but let us consider, is it so light and trivial a Thing to lie dying for ever in a Sea of Flames? It might here be ask'd, where are your Tears, O ye Mortal Men? For such we are; how do we grieve and vex ourselves at every little ordinary Loss; but the loss of *Eternity*, tho' it cannot be recover'd, fits easie on our Minds, nay, we are so stupid as to smile at the Misfortune. We tremble to appear before a Temporal Judge, who partakes of the same common Nature with ourselves; and tho' we hasten every Day to make our Appearance at God's Tribunal, yet we are not in the least concern'd about it. When we make a Voyage, we are in fear of being cast away, but are in no Apprehension when we launch into the endless Sea of *Eternity*; when there is the greatest Reason to be fearful, we are least afraid.

It was a just and pious Wish of St. Bernard; Oh that Men were wise! That they were wise! What then Holy Bernard? That the Image of *Eternity* might be reviv'd in their Minds, that they might wisely reflect on Things present, think on Things past with Understanding, and provide in Time for Things to come.

See, saith St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, *That ye walk circumspectly, not as Fools Eph. 5. 15, but as wise, redeeming the Time, because the Days 16. are evil.* He does not barely wish that they wou'd do so, but he lays his strict Command upon them, *See that ye walk circumspectly.* Our Salvation is a Matter of the greatest Importance,

tance, and consequently deserves our greatest Care; how foolish then are they who squander away that precious Time, which was given them by God to secure to themselves a blessed *Eternity, in Rioting and Drunkenness, in Chambering and Wantonness.* Good God! What a stupid and senseless Prodigality is this? Do we think to purchase Heaven by Diversions and Idleness, by Trifling and Unprofitable Conversation? This is not the way to redeem the Time, he only can be truly said to improve it, who makes frequent and fervent Prayers to God, and attends thereunto with an indefatigable Application. Among other Advices, which St. *Augustin* gives us, to steal away some Time from our Ordinary Business, he lays this down as a very good Rule. If a Man has a Suit at Law with another, he ought to neglect it, and lose his Right, that he may be the more at Leisure to serve God; for that which is lost, is more than recompenc'd by the Time that is gain'd. But as thou payest thy Money, and hast Bread in Exchange for it, so be content to lose thy Money, if by so doing thou canst gain an Opportunity of serving God, and then thy Loss will turn to thy Advantage. This is properly and truly to redeem the Time.

The Opportunity of doing Good is indeed to be purchas'd at any Price whatever, because, as the Apostle excellently observes, *the Days are Evil.* The Days of our Life, saith St. *Anselm* are full of Grief, they are subject to innumerable Dangers and Temptations, which deprive us of the Power of employing our Time to the best Advantage; and if we suffer this Opportunity

tunity to escape, if we suffer our Life to slide away insensibly in Resolutions of Amendment, we shall not obtain one Moment hereafter to repair our neglect. *Nazianzen* compares our Life to a *Fair*; if we foolishly neglect to supply ourselves with what we want while the Fair lasts, there is no buying any Thing when once it is ended. Let us therefore lay hold on the present Opportunity of serving God, now in the Days of our Youth, while we enjoy our Health and Strength; this Precept is more than once inculcated upon us by the wise *Eccles. 9.* Preacher, *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might, for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.* The same good Advice is likewise very often urg'd upon us by the Apostle *St. Paul*; he very earnestly exhorts us not to neglect the present Time, *As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do good unto all Men, for now it is high Time to awake out of sleep.* Thou sleepest, saith *St. Ambrose*, but thy Time sleeps not; it is ever in Motion, it flies away with incredible swiftness, nor is it in our Power to bribe its stay. Happy, for ever Happy, are all those Persons, who not only think on these Things, but really do them; who employ their Time to such excellent Purposes in the noble Works of Charity and Mercy, as at the Hour of Death, they will wish they had done; who do those Things now, as will be Matter of Joy and Comfort to them, when they stand possess'd of a Blessed Eternity. Let us Treasure up in our Minds this admirable Sentence, *Levis neglectus, aeternum sit dispendium, a light Neglect now, may possibly prove an Eternal Loss, it may*

may possibly Occasion the loss of our Souls for ever and ever.

CHAP. II.

The Reward of Eternal Life.

THE Life, which the Saints enjoy above, is Life indeed; consider it either as *Animal* or *Human*, as *Angelical* or *Divine*, 'tis perfect Life. The Memory is blest with an entire Reminiscence of all Things that are past; the Understanding is enlarg'd both with the Knowledge and Vision of God; the Will is gratified with every Thing that is good, and desirable; the Appetite pursues what is pleasing and agreeable; and the Senses enjoy all that is delightful and entertaining. No Cares nor Sorrows, no Pains nor Evils e're come there; 'tis a Life of Holiness, Purity, and Charity; 'tis a Life of Friendship, Peace and Tranquillity; 'tis a Life of Glory, Honour and Immortality; Love and Joys and Pleasures Everlasting, and all Things which in the utmost stretch of Thought we can hope or wish for, both in Relation to our Souls and Bodies, are the happy Ingredients of that glorious State.

August. de Civit. Dei Cap. 30. *St. Augustin*, being inflam'd with the desire of enjoying such a Life of perfect and immutable Felicity, expresses himself to this Effect. How great is the Happiness of that Eternal State

State, which abounds with every Thing that is Good, and is absolutely free from every Thing that is Evil : Where we shall continually extol and celebrate the Praises of God, who is all in all ! *Blessed are they who dwell in thy House, they will be always praising thee.* *Psalm 34.* All the Faculties of⁴ our Souls, and the Members of our Bodies having put on Incorruption, shall be ever employ'd in singing the Praises of the Great *Yahovah*. That is true Glory, when He to whom we offer Incense cannot be flatter'd, nor we deceiv'd in paying our Oblations ; that is true Honour, which is bestow'd on the deserving, to which the Unworthy dare not pretend ; 'tis the true and proper Reward of Merit, and is enjoy'd by none, but those who deserve it. There He, who is the giver of Vertue, will be its Reward ; He has promis'd to give us even Himself ; and what cou'd He promise greater or better than Himself ? This God has been pleas'd to signify to us by the Mouth of His Prophet *Jeremiah*, *I will be their God, and they shall be my People.* *Jer. 31.* I will be all Things to them,³³ as in Reason and Prudence they can possibly Desire, in me they shall find Peace and Plenty, Life and Health, Glory and Honour ; I will fill their Hearts with all that is desirable. And this is the meaning of that Saying, *God shall be all in all*, He shall be the end of all our wishes. And the City that is above, has this peculiar Excellency belonging to it, which is not elsewhere to be found ; and that is this, the Inhabitants thereof shall not Envy one another, but universal Love and Concord shall prevail among them ; there every one is satisfied with his proper Condition, like the Members of a natural

natural well-compacted Body, where the Eye does not desire to be the Finger, nor the Finger to be the Eye, but all agree and are Content with their several Stations. The same Father subjoins a little after; there we shall enjoy an Eternal Sabbath, we shall taste and see how sweet the Lord is, we shall be fill'd with his Goodness, when He shall be all in all. O God my God! Thou art Truth and Charity; true Eternity and Eternal Felicity.

Another, being full of Extasie and Transport, addresses himself to This Life in the following Manner; In thee, saith he, there is no Corruption, thou art not subject to any Defect, Old-Age and Anger approach thee not; Peace and Joy, and Glory Everlasting attend upon thee; perfect Health and Youth's sweet Bloom, the charms of Beauty, and the Graces of the Spring, are thy Portion for ever.

Psalms 87.
2.

Very excellent Things are spoken of thee, thou City of God; thou art the Seat of those that rejoice; Fear and Sorrow are banish'd from thy Palaces; thou hast all that the Heart of Man can wish for, pure unmix'd Pleasures dwell with thee, thou givest Satisfaction to all our Desires, and our Hopes are made perfect in Enjoyment.

Psalms 36.
3, 9.

They shall be satisfied with the plentifulness of thy House, and thou shalt give them drink of thy Pleasures, as out of the River; for with thee is the Well of Life, and in thy Light shall we see Light. When we shall see thee in thyself, and ourselves in thee, and thee in us; when we shall always see thee, and enjoy thee in Happiness Everlasting.

This

This Everlasting Happiness may easily be obtain'd, it is in every Mans Power to go to Heaven if he pleases; for tho' the Way thither is strait and narrow, yet it is not so extremely rough and difficult as we imagine it to be. *[Mark 8. 2.]* *have Compassion on the Multitude, saith our Saviour, because they have now been with me Three Days, and have had nothing to eat.* Was it such a mighty Matter to fast Three short Days, that our Saviour shou'd take so much Notice of it? O Blessed Jesus! Why didst thou not rather tell us of that *Eternity* of Joy and Happiness, which thou hast prepar'd for them that love Thee and keep thy Commandments? God will not pass by the least Service which we do Him, but will look upon himself as indebted to us for it. He numbers the Hairs of our Heads, and can we imagine when we suffer Persecution, and spill our Blood for his Sake and upon his Account, that He will not Treasure it up in His Remembrance? We may therefore very justly cry out with St. *Hierome*; What a Happiness is it to have God for our Debtor, to receive so large and ample a Recompence for a slight imperfect inconsiderable Service, to suffer for a little Time here on Earth, and to be Crown'd hereafter with Eternal Glory! To this you reply, that it is very hard to Flesh and Blood to be perpetually tormented, but supposing all the Sufferings of this Life to be tolerable, how, say you, shall I Conquer the Fear of Death, when the very Thought of it is so terrible? Forbear I beseech you these vain Complaints, do not make yourself a Child, why shou'd you thus unman yourself?

self? Knowest thou not thus much? I know that I Ascend to Descend, that I Flourish to Wither, am Young to grow Old, that I Live to Die, and Die to be Happy to all *Eternity*.

Isa. 26. 4. *Trust therefore in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is Everlasting Strength.*

Matt. 25. 46. St. *Augustin* observes in one of his Sermons, that our Blessed Saviour concluded his Description of the Day of Judgment in these Words; *And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life Eternal.* Upon which He makes these excellent Reflections; the Blessing which is here promis'd is *Eternal Life*: Life is promis'd, because Men in this Life are so desirous of it; and because they fear nothing so much as Death, it is said to be *Eternal*. Do you wish for a long Life? You shall be satisfied with it; are you afraid of the Terrors of Death? They shall not come near you; but they who groan under the Wrath of God, and suffer the Vengeance of Everlasting Fire, wish earnestly for Death but cannot Die. It is therefore manifest, that long Life is no such mighty Blessing, nor is it a mighty Matter, to Live always; but to be Happy to all *Eternity* is a mighty Blessing indeed, to Live always and to be Happy always is so absolute a Blessing, that it admits of no Comparison but itself.

Thou shalt therefore live in Heaven, and thy Life shall be Immortal; thou shalt enjoy a State of perfect Happiness, a State so entirely free and exempted from all manner of Evil, that it is not possible for any Calamity to imberter your Felicity; there all thy Wishes shall be perfected.

perfected in Fruition, insomuch that thou shalt only Desire to possess what thou dost possess; and beside all this, thou shalt have the sweet inexpressible Satisfaction of being assur'd, That this thy Happiness does not depend upon any Uncertainties, that it is not liable to Decay, nor subject to Change, and that none can deprive you of it, or take it from you. Here it was that King David hop'd to satisfy his Hunger, and quench his Thirst; *In thy Presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy Right Hand, there is Pleasure for evermore.* And again, *I will behold thy Presence in Righteousness, and when I awake up after thy Likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.* What a strange Expression is this for a King, whose Table was furnish'd with all manner of Dainties; but alas! This cou'd not give him Satisfaction, he is hungry and a-thirst for another Table, he hungers after the Bread of Heaven, and is a-thirst for the Water of Life. What is all the Plenty of the greatest Potentate? 'Tis Poor and Mean, 'tis at the best but a homely Treat, in Comparison of a Spiritual and Heavenly Entertainment. *Eat, O Friends,* Cant. 5. 1. *Drink, yea Drink abundantly, O Beloved,* will the King of Heaven then say; this Feast of mine shall always last, nor shall it be succeeded with an after-Repentance, as it is now, it shall be for ever. St. *Augustin* is not able to contain his Transports, his Joys are too great to be confin'd, he cannot put Bounds to his Extracies and Raptures, but breaks forth again into this pious Exclamation. O Life of Life, O Eternal Life and Blessed Eternity! Where is Joy without Sorrow, Rest without Labour, Riches without Loss, Health without Sicknes, Plenty,

Psalm 16.

12.

Psalm 17.

16.

ty without Want, Life without Death, Perpetuity without Corruption, Happiness without Calamity, where all these Blessings are made perfect in Charity! Where perfect Knowledge is in all Things, and thro' all Things; where God vouchsafes his most glorious Presence, and satisfies the Minds of those that behold him with this heavenly Food; they are always intent in beholding His Divine Majesty, and they desire always to behold it; their Desires are without Uneasiness, and there is no Satiety in their Satisfaction.

Now that we Christians may be made acquainted, that this Heavenly Kingdom, this immense Treasure and transcendent Glory are all to be purchas'd, let us hear what St. *Augustin* says concerning them: I have to sell, I have to sell, saith God, come ye all and buy it. Lord, what is that which thou hast to sell? Rest, will you purchase it? Of what value is the Purchase? The Price is Labour. How much Labour? Can Eternal Rest be bought with Labour? To State this Matter according to the Intrinsic Worth of Things, Eternal Rest ought to be purchas'd with nothing less than Eternal Labour; but let not the Price give you any Disturbance, the God whom we serve is full of Mercy; for if the Labour enjoin'd was to be Eternal; Eternal Rest cou'd never be obtain'd, and therefore that you may enjoy your Purchase, the Labour demanded is not Eternal, it is only during Life, tho' it is really worth so much. Let us therefore according to St. *Augustin's* Advice, excite and stir up one another in the following Manner. We

We must often and seriously consider with ourselves, what is the Nature of that Eternal State, where we hope to Live and to be Happy for ever; and in order the better to understand it, we must be careful to remove from it, whatever we Experience to be troublesome in this Life; for it is easier to affirm what it is not, than expressly to determine what it is. But notwithstanding the Impossibility of arriving to an exact Knowledge of it, it is expos'd to Sale, and it is in our Power to buy it if we please; nor need we be concern'd about the Price of it; let us give what we have, and that will be accepted; the Purchase is so considerable, that it is worth our buying, tho' we give ourselves for it, and if we give ourselves for it, we shall certainly obtain it. Alas! Cries one, I am a wicked and ungodly Sinner, what will it then avail me to offer myself? Can I hope in these my unhappy Circumstances, that God in his Goodness will vouchsafe to receive me? Do not Despair, make a solemn Promise of giving thyself, and that shall be a means of making thee Good, and when this happy Change shall be perfected, and thou shalt really become a New-Creature, then thou shalt be a sufficient Price, then thou shalt have, as I observ'd before, not only Health and Safety, and Life without end, but thou shalt be freed from many Inconveniences, which are apt to embitter the sweets of Life; thou shalt never be weary, nor have occasion to sleep; thou shalt be freed from Hunger and Thirst, thou shalt never grow Old, but be Happy in a State of absolute Perfection, which as it

requires no Increase, so neither will it admit of any Diminution. Behold and see what great and glorious Things are spoken of it, yet after all that has been said, we must acknowledge that it is utterly impossible for us to discover the Treasures of this Blessed State; for *neither hath*
 1 Cor. 2. *Eye seen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd in-*
 9. *to the Heart of Man the Things, which God hath prepar'd for them that love him.* How then can it be expected, that I shou'd relate these inestimable Blessings, which the Heart of Man is not able to conceive.

We have already gone thro' St. *Augustin's* Books, as thro' so many sweet and pleasant Gardens which have brought us to *Paradise*; I shall therefore Confirm and Seal, as it were, what I have already said, with the Words of the same most eloquent Father. Were we to endure the most pungent Torments which Cruelty itself cou'd possibly invent, were we to endure the Flames of Hell, for a considerable Time, endure the Rage and Furious Lashes of insulting Devils, that we might see our Saviour in his Glory, and be enroll'd among the number of his Saints; it wou'd surely be very well worth our while, to bear all this, and even more, if possible, to enjoy so great and inestimable a Benefit, and to be made Partakers of such an exceeding Weight of Glory. Let all the Powers of Hell attack me, let them lie in wait to ensnare my Soul, let them assault me with innumerable Temptations; let my Body be broke with Fasting, and my Flesh subdued with the most rigorous Mortifications; let my Strength be exhausted with Labour, and my

my Moisture dried up with continual Watching; let the Wicked exclaim against me, let them vex my Soul and disturb the ease and quiet of my Life, let me be pinch'd and bow'd down with Cold, let me be scorch'd and burnt up with Heat; let my Head ake as if it were breaking, let my Breast and Stomach be all in Disorder, let my Countenance be as Pale as Death, let no one Part be sound within me; let me be full of Infirmities, let Rottenness enter into my Bones, let it flow under me like a Fountain; let all these Miseries come upon me, so I may but have rest in the Day of Tribulation, and ascend into Heaven, and receive *of the Lord the Reward of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* For who can tell the Glory of the Righteous? Who can express the Joy of the Saints, when their Faces shall shine like the Sun in the Firmament, when the Judge of the World shall review his true and faithful Servants, and shall appoint them their Places and Stations in his Fathers Kingdom, and shall distribute his Rewards in Proportion, to the Goodness and Excellency of their Works.

Col. 3. 24.

Col. 1. 12.

Let us therefore think on the Years of *Eternity*, let us think on the Eternal Immutable State of Happiness and Misery, which shall be hereafter; such Thoughts as these will prevent our complaining of the Miseries of this Life; we shall not then Expostulate with God, why He made us so unhappy, we shall not then cry out in the bitterness of our Anguish, that this or that Evil is too much for our Strength, that our Burden is heavier than we can bear: I dare be bold to say, that if we

fix our Thoughts upon Eternity, none of these complaints will ever fall from us, but that on the contrary, we shall *Glory in Tribulation*, and that our Rejoicing will then be greatest, when our Sufferings are most severe.

Rom 5. 3.

John Moschus the Hermite, in his Treatise of the *New Paradise*, gives us a Relation of one *Olympius* a venerable Old Man, who endur'd a great many Hardships and Afflictions, in the Prospect of obtaining a Blessed *Eternity*. It happen'd, saith my Author, that a Friend of his, as he travell'd that Way made him a visit, who finding him in a narrow lonely Cell, which abounded with swarms of Gnats and Flies, was much surpriz'd at his manner of Life: After some Discourse, He ask'd *Olympius* how he cou'd live in so unwholesom a Place, that the Heat was extremely troublesome, and that the Flies and Gnats were no less incommodious: To this the good Old Man reply'd; my Dearest Son, the Evils which you mention are Light and Inconsiderable; I can easily bear them, so I may but escape the Torments of Hell. What is the biting of a few Gnats, in Comparison of the Anguish of a wounded Conscience? I had rather feel their persecuting Stings, than suffer the gnawing of the cruel Worm which never Dies; And as for the Heat, he that fears Hell fire will reckon it as nothing; these little Evils, if I may call them Evils, are Short and Transitory, but the Stings of Conscience, and the Pains of Hell, are of a boundless and interminable Duration. *Olympius*, said the other, Thou art Surely inspir'd with the Spirit of Wisdom, True and Just is thy Answer;

Answer; I wish that there were many such as thou art, for wou'd Men but consider the Years of Eternity, they wou'd then, like thee, endure the Miseries and Calamities of this Life, with a Patience invincible.

The Conclusion.

TIS reported of *Zeuxis* the most celebrated Painter among the Ancients, that he was extremely slow and tedious in finishing his Pieces; and that being ask'd the Reason of it, he immediately reply'd, that He painted for *Eternity*. What he said of his Painting we may apply to ourselves, since every Thing that we do has so close and near a Relation to *Eternity*, that every Man may truly say, whether I Write or Read, Sing or Pray, Work or Think, all is for *Eternity*. Seeing then like *Zeuxis*, we may all be said to paint for *Eternity*, it highly concerns us, if we have any Affection and Kindness for ourselves, *Whatsoever our Hands find us to do, to do it with our might*, that our Work may be Bright and Perfect, and that no Signs of an unpardonable Negligence, may stain and blemish the Merit of the Performance. Certain it is, and I cannot but repeat it, that all that we do, and say, and think, must be transmitted to *Eternity*, and that they will then be try'd and examin'd

by an Impartial and All-seeing Judge, who can easily discover the nicest Imperfections, Heb. 4 12, *For He is a discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart, neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all Things are naked and open unto the Eyes of him, with whom we have to do.* He will then pass Sentence according to our Works, and the Wicked shall go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal. Matt. 25. 46.

In all our Actions, saith St. Gregory, we must use great Care and Circumspection, we must weigh and examine them to the Bottom, and satisfy ourselves, that the End for which we did them did not favour of any worldly Interest, but was principally and solely directed to *Eternity*. Therefore, says this Holy Father, see that thy Works be perfect; Pray and Study for *Eternity*, Labour, Suffer and Contend for *Eternity*; so live to God that thou mayst live with him; so live on Earth that thou mayst live in Heaven; so live to *Eternity*, that thou mayst enjoy a Blessed *Eternity*.

St. Bernard observes, That the Actions which we do in this Life do not immediately pass away as soon as they are done; they are all, saith he, the Seeds of *Eternity*, which being sown here, will spring up hereafter. He that is unwise and void of Understanding, will probably be surpriz'd to see so large and plentiful a Crop, (which is Good or Evil, according to the Quality of the Seed that was sown) arise from so small a Quantity of Seed; but he that is wise will ponder these Things, he will think
no

no Sin to be little, he will not regard the present Seed, but have an Eye to the Future Harvest; he will not regard the Things which are Temporal, but will fix his Thoughts and place his Affections on the Things which are Eternal.

O ye unhappy Sons of *Adam*! What Madness possesses you, that you shou'd be so bent upon making yourselves miserable? We were design'd by God to an *Inheritance, incorruptible and undefil'd, that fadeth not away, reserved for us in Heaven*; but notwithstanding this his gracious Designation, we eagerly pursue the vain and flattering Enjoyments of this World, which in their own Nature are of a very uncertain and precarious Continuance. God has appointed us to be Heirs of *Eternity*, and is under an Engagement, if we keep his Commandments to bestow upon us a Heavenly Country; but we greedily run after the Pleasures of this Life, we ensnare and entangle ourselves with Trifles, and hasten our Ruin, as if we were in Love with Misery and Destruction. *Let us Work the Work of him that made us while it is Day, the Night cometh when no Man can Work*; let us be wise and prepare for *Eternity*, we are hastening towards it every Moment, the Steps which we take are large and wide, the Way indeed is short and narrow, but the End thereof is of vast Extent.

Wretched and Miserable Men that we are, we wou'd gladly stand possess'd of an *Eternity* of Happiness, and yet at the same Time we foolishly neglect the necessary Means by which we may

may obtain it; we desire to be in Heaven, yet refuse to go thither. There is no Man, saith St. *Augustin*, but what desires to be Happy. Who will shew us any Good? Where shall I find that Peace and Tranquillity which my Soul thirsts after? This is the general Voice of Mankind, this is the ultimate End of our Desires, and in this one Thing we are all agreed; but we differ about the Ways and Means of obtaining this Happiness, some take one Way and some another. I cannot but say that Happiness is worth our enquiring after, but if we expect to find it here on Earth, we seek it in a Place, where it never will be found. There are some who affirm, that the Soldiers are the only Happy Men; others are Charm'd with the Peasants calm and peaceful Life; others again give the Preference to the Lawyer, He defends the Rights and Priviledges of Mankind, and his Gains are considerable. To be a Judge, crys one, is an honourable Post, he hears and determines Causes, and can any Thing be a greater Happiness? Another enlarges in the Merchant's Praises, He passes the Seas, and observes the Customs and Manners of Mankind, He brings a Mass of Treasure from the *Indies*, and in his Opinion none so Happy as the Merchant. Thus we see, that among all the different States and Conditions of Life, there is not any one Particular with which all are pleas'd, but a Happy Life is acceptable to all.

The vain Attempts which we make after Happiness in this lower World, are a sufficient Intimation that we must seek it in some other

other Place; nor can it ever be found, but by a Good and Holy Death. The Wicked and Ungodly Desire to die the Death of the Righteous, but are unwilling to live the Life of the Righteous; to Die well is the beginning of Happiness, but to Live well is a laborious Work, and this must be done, if we will enter into Life; *Eternity* depends upon the manner of our Death, learn to Live well, and then you will Die well, as our Life is, such will be our Death, whether Good or Evil; when once we are lost, we are lost for ever.

Not many Years ago a Person of Distinction, who had abundance of Wit but little or no Religion, being ask'd to give his Sentiments of those who led a pious and godly Life, and of those who minded nothing but their Pleasure, immediately reply'd, that He cou'd gladly live the Life of the one, and die the Death of the other. The Answer was smart and witty, but as a Christian He ought to have said, I desire to live the Life of the Righteous, that my Death may be like his. It was a wise and pious wish of *Balaam*, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.* ^{Numb. 23. 10.} But his wish had been more prudent had He fram'd it thus, let me live the Life of the Righteous, that my last End may be like his.

A certain Soldier being reprehended by *Lamachus* for some Misdemeanour, endeavour'd to excuse himself, saying, that he wou'd never commit the like Fault again; to whom the Centurion made this excellent Reply, *In bella, bone*

The Ninth Consideration

bone Vir, non licet bis peccare, Sir, there is no offending Twice in War. But in Death we must not presume, to offend no not once; the Sins which we commit can never be recall'd, when once we are Dead we shall always be so, and if we die the Death of the Wicked, what Hopes can we have of Pardon and Forgiveness? After Death there is no Repentance, there is no Possibility of returning from the Grave to retrieve the Errors of an ill-spent Life, there is no Possibility of making Satisfaction for our former wicked sinful Actions; as Death leaves us, so Judgment will find us, our Condition will be fix'd and unalterable, we shall be Happy or Miserable for ever and ever.

It was an excellent Saying of *Iphicrates*, the General of the *Athenians*, *it is but an ill excuse for a General to say, non putáram, I had not thought it:* But it wou'd be infinitely worse for a Christian to say, I did not think that there was so vast and considerable a Difference between a chaste and voluptuous Life; I did not think that an *Eternity* of Happiness or Misery depended upon it, nor did I think that I shou'd die so soon. Is *Eternity* a Matter of so little Importance, that we dare to sleep over it? Is not the Eternal Salvation of our Souls worth seeking after? If it is, why are we so abominably Lazy? Why do we not earnestly set about it? Such is the great Uncertainty of this Life, that we cannot be sure of it, no not for a Moment; but we are sure, that there will come a Time when we must bid adieu to the World, tho' we do not know the Hour of our Dissolution; and when that gloomy Hour shall

shall arise, we shall then seem not so much to have liv'd, as to have flown in an Instant to the Regions of Eternity. No Man can be said to be a real Proprietor of any Thing, *we are* Heb. 11. *Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth, as all our* 13. *Fathers were,* we were sent into the World to Psalm 39. 14. be train'd up and disciplin'd for Eternity, we are here but Sojourners, and in a little Time we must depart hence and be no more seen, *For we have here no continuing City, but we seek* Heb. 13. *one to come.* 14.

Where are the Princes of the Heathen become? Baruch 3. Saith the Prophet Baruch; *where are those that* 16, 17. *ruled the Beasts upon the Earth, where are they that had their Pastime with the Fowls of the Air, that boarded up Silver and Gold, wherein Men trust and made no end of their getting?* What is become of their Honour and Glory? Are they still possess'd of their mighty Kingdoms? No; for thus the Prophet makes Answer to the Question which he himself propos'd, *They are* Ver. 19. *vanish'd and gone down to the Grave, and others are come up in their steads. They are vanish'd,* saith the Prophet, for they were but Sojourners not Proprietors, their Houses are given to others, they themselves are cast out, they are gone down to the Grave where all Things are forgotten. But if the Question be ask'd; where are the Princes of Heaven who inhabit the Regions of Light and Happiness? We cannot reply, that they are vanish'd, and that others are come up in their steads, but that they still remain in the Kingdom of Heaven, and that no Successions of Ages whatever shall be able to remove them.

Let

Wisd. 2. 8. *Let us Crown ourselves with Rose-buds, say the Ungodly to each other, who lead a voluptuous and dissolute Life; but why do they choose to make Crowns of Roses, their Smell and Beauty vanish in a Day, and they who make them are like unto them, they must also in a little Time go down into the Pit. The Crowns of the Blessed are made of Gems and Precious Stones, their Grace and Beauty never fade, the Glory of their Lustre is eternally the same. The Woman mention'd in the Revelations, had upon her Head a Crown of Twelve Stars, it was not made of Roses or Pearls, but of the Stars of Heaven. And as the Heavens above are incorruptible, so are they who inhabit them, they are not subject to any Change or Dissolution, but are as Immortal as the Heavens themselves.*

Wisd. 5. 15. *The Righteous live for evermore, their Reward also is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the most High. All Human Things are liable to Decay, but the Things above endure for ever; here we are wasted and impair'd with Labour tho' it is but short, but there we shall enjoy Everlasting Rest. Our Labour is not yet at an End, why do we vainly seek for Rest? Alas our Time is not yet come. We are yet upon the Theatre of the World, and it much concerns us to act our Parts to the best Advantage. The Enemies which assault us are many, and their Forces are considerable, we must therefore Fight the good Fight of Faith, that we may lay hold on Eternal Life.*

1 Tim. 6. 12.

If

If we wou'd but consider, saith the pious Gregory, what exceeding great and precious Things are promis'd unto us in Heaven, the glittering Pomp and Vanities of the World wou'd seem vile unto us; shew me the Man that is able to express, or even to conceive the mighty Joys of the Saints above; to join in Confort with the heavenly Host in singing the Praises of our great Creator; to be admitted into the Presence of God, and to see His Glory; to behold the Light that cannot be limited and circumscrib'd; to be free from the Fears of Death, and to be cloath'd with Immortal, Incorruptible Bodies; How is my Heart inflam'd within me, while I utter these great and glorious Things? It is already upon the wing to Heaven, and is desirous even now to make a part of the Angelic Choir, with whom it Hopes to rejoice for ever. But we must not forget, that this *Eternity* of Happiness, is not to be obtain'd without Labour and Difficulty; this we learn from St. Paul, who was a powerful and excellent Preacher, *Thou 2 Tim. 2. therefore endure hardness*, saith he to Timothy, *as 3. 5. a good Soldier of Jesus Christ, for a Man is not crown'd except he strive.* We must not therefore think on the Difficulty of the Work, but lift up our Eyes to the Recompence of Reward, which will add new Vigour to our fainting Spirits; we must continue to go on and persevere in our Labours, we must not regard the roughness of the Way, but keep our Minds intent on the Happiness of the Country to which we are tending. This, saith the Father whom I just now mention'd, is a particular
mark

mark and sign of the Elect, that they so Comport and Demean themselves in their present Pilgrimage, that by the Assistance of Hope, which is a chearful and enlivening Principle, they are assur'd that they have already ascended a considerable heighth, inso-much that they see the World beneath them, and for the Love which they bear to *Eternity*, they have the Courage to disdain the Trifles of Time, and to trample upon them with an Heroick Indignation.

This is what God himself vouchsafes to declare by his Holy Prophet, to the Soul that follows him; *I will lift thee up above the high Places of the Earth.* Poverty and Reproach, Humility and Disgrace, are as it were, the lower Places, which are avoided by those who Love the World, and Delight to walk in the broad smooth Way; but Gain and Profit, and the soothing Insinuations and Flatteries of Inferiours, Riches, Honours, and Pleasures are the High-Places, which, they who fix their Hearts upon them, have in great Esteem; but when our Affections are set upon celestial Things, then we presently perceive that the Things which we formerly so much valu'd are but empty Trifles, and not to be compar'd with the endless Enjoyment of an *Eternity* of Happiness. But as it is with those who ascend a high Mountain, the further they advance, the lower the Earth seems to be beneath them; so it is with those whose Conversation is in Heaven, the higher they Mount upon the Wings of Devotion, the further they flie from this lower Earth; they are fully sensible, that the Riches

Riches and Honours, and Glories of the World are nothing but Vanity, and therefore they wisely Place their Affections on the Things above, *Where Christ sitteth at the Right Hand of God.* Col. 3. 1. What St. Gregory says, is confirm'd by St. *Augustin*, who Reasons much after the same Manner. Let us exchange those Things, for an Eternal Recompence, which in a little Time by a fatal and unavoidable Necessity will be taken from us. *Moses* enjoy'd a vigorous Health, he liv'd a long and happy Life even to a good Old Age, but he died at last; the Age of *Methuselah* was much greater than his, but he also died, *For we must needs die, and are as Water spilt upon the Ground.* But when our Mortal Part is gone, the Soul remains; it is an immortal, incorruptible Principle, it remains to be punish'd or rewarded for ever. This Life determines what kind of Eternity will be our Lot hereafter, be it Happy or Miserable it is fix'd and irrevocable. O Happy Eternity, O Eternal Felicity! Whence comes it to pass that Men so seldom allow thee a Place in their Thoughts: And when they do, with what a cold Indifference do they think upon thee: How solicitous are they about other Matters, and how unmindful of their greatest Good? O Lord God, open thou our Eyes, that we may see and know what it is to enjoy an endless Felicity, and what it is to dwell in Everlasting Burnings. Thou, O God, hast created us for thyself, thou hast created us for Eternity, because thou art Eternity; thou wouldst have us be Partakers of thy Eternity, let it be, O Lord, according to thy Pleasure: Thou hast said it, let it be according

Q ing

ing to thy Word; thou hast promis'd it, O Lord, make good thy Promise, O make us Partakers of thy *Eternity*. Grant we beseech thee, O merciful God, that we may employ the little Time we have to live in such a Pious and Holy Manner, as becomes all those who labour for *Eternity*, who suffer and contend for a Blessed *Eternity*. To this End, let us often excite each other to preserve in our Minds the Remembrance of *Eternity*, that we may not fail of doing all that we are able, to save our Souls from perishing Everlastingly. Hear ye this all ye Christians, hear ye this all ye Kings and Princes, and Judges of the Earth.

Nulla satis magna Securitas, ubi periclitatur Aternitas;

There can be no sufficient Security, where there is danger of losing Eternity.

Oh infinitely profound and amazing *Eternity*! Blessed are they, O Lord, who dwell in thy House, they will be always praising thee.

Psaln 84.
4.

Moses, perceiving his End approaching, commended the People of *Israel* unto God, and bestow'd on each Tribe a Particular Blessing: He took his Farewel of the Children of *Asher* in the following Manner; Let *Asher* be blessed with Children; let him be acceptable to his Brethren, and let him dip his Foot in Oil; thy Shoes shall be Iron and Brasse, and as thy Days so shall thy Strength be. There is none like unto the God of *Jethurun*, who rideth upon the Heavens in thy Help, and in his Excellency on the Skie.

Deut. 33.
24, 25, 26,
27.

Skie. The Eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms. By this we see, that the Power of God extends itself throughout the Heavens, and that the whole World and all Things therein are govern'd and directed by his mighty Arm: He determin'd himself from all *Eternity* to be a Habitation to the Righteous; God is never Absent from them, He is always ready to embrace them in his Arms, and to cover them with his Wings in the Day of Calamity. Ascend thither, O my Soul, ascend and enter into thy Holy Habitation; why dost thou contend with Earth and Clay? Mount, mount my Soul, and with expanded Wings ascend unto God who rides upon the Heavens, and has his Dwelling in the high and lofty Mountains of *Eternity*. There thou mayst sit in Safety, and look down with scorn on this lower Earth, and see what poor mean Things they are, which either Charm or Affright thee from thy Duty. There thou mayst observe, that all Things are Emptiness and Vanity, that they are vile and contemptible, and even nothing in Respect of God and *Eternity*. What hast thou then to do, but bid farewell to the Trifles of Time, and to resolve with thyself to seek after God, who is the only true and sovereign Good: Trust in the Lord and depend upon Him, *For Isa. 26. 4. in the Lord Jehovah is Everlasting Strength*; open thy Heart and enlarge thy Affections to give him a chearful and welcome Entertainment, condemn the Temptations and Terrors of Sense, be above the World, and think on nothing but *Eternity*. *The Lord is thy Light Psalm 27. and thy Salvation, whom then canst thou fear? 1. 5.*

The Lord is the Strength of thy Life, of whom then canst thou be afraid? For in the Time of Trouble, he shall hide thee in his Tabernacle, yea, in the Secret Place of his dwelling shall he hide thee, and set thee up upon a Rock of Stone. He that rides upon the Heavens is thy Helper, He shall take thee into his Everlasting Arms, and lift up thy Head above thine Enemies round about thee. Do Lust and Intemperance assault thy Vertue? Do they lay a Thousand Temptations in thy Way? Do they charm and invite thee in a very pleasing and delightful Manner? Be of good Courage, revolve in thy Mind the Pleasures of Eternity, and they shall not be able to prevail against thee. Neither be afraid of the Terrors of the World: Do Sorrows and Afflictions encompass thee about? Dost thou languish on the Bed of Sickness? Or art thou oppress'd with Poverty and Contempt? And what if this should be thy Case, why should thy Heart be disquieted within Thee? The more violent thy Afflictions are, the shorter will be their Continuance; shake off thy Fear the Betrayer of thy Reason, be above thy Misfortunes, and learn to be great by being Unhappy; Lift up thy Eyes to the Hills from whence cometh thy Help, look up to Heaven, and think upon Eternity. There shall no Evil happen to the Just, or rather, He shall not be discourag'd when any Evil happens unto Him.

Horat.
Carm. Lib.
3. Ode 3.

*Si fractus illabatur Orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinae.*

*The Shatter'd World may strike him dead,
Not make his Soul afraid.*

Is the Just Man then exempted from Afflictions? No, *Many are the Troubles of the Righteous*, but he counts them as nothing, he counts nothing Evil, but that which is Eternal; nothing, but that which separates him from the Love of God, and that is Sin, and the Wages of Sin is Eternal Death. St. Paul advises us, *Not to look at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal.* By which he kindly intimates to us, that nothing is of so great Importance as Eternity, be it Happy or Miserable.

Hear ye this, O ye Mortal Men, who dwell upon Trifles, and seldom contemplate the Things of Eternity; what can ye say in excuse for your Folly? In your Dreams ye are wondrous Wise, but in Matters of the highest Moment ye are perfect Children: We waste and consume our Days in such Vanities, as will not only pass away, but are now actually passing; *For the Fashion of this World passeth away.* The Good with which we are here so much affected is of a short Duration, and the Evils and Calamities under which we languish, are likewise short; but the Things which are not seen, are of a fix'd and unchangeable Nature, they partake of the Immortality of the Being that made them, and are like him Incorruptible and Everlasting.

Symphorianus, a Young Gentleman of Christian Parents, having been almost dead alive
by

by the bloody Stripes of his inhumane Persecutors, met his Mother in the Way as he was led to Execution; who was so far from compassionating his Circumstances, that, in stead of beating her Breast, tearing her Hair, and shewing all those signs of Sorrow, which a tender Parent wou'd naturally have done in such a Case, with an exalted Presence of Mind she address'd him thus: *My dearest Son, be not dismay'd at thy present Sufferings, think upon Eternity; lift up thy Eyes and behold thy Saviour, who reigneth in the Heavens; let thy Enemies execute their Rage upon thee, they cannot take away thy Life, they can only oblige thee to exchange it for a better.* These Words so animated the Young Man, that he chearfully submitted his Neck to the Axe, with a truly Christian Courage and Resolution.

Let us make *Symphorianus's* Case our own; we resemble him more than we easily imagine, our Circumstances and his are much the same; we are all going down to the Chambers of Death, and must all appear before God's Tribunal, tho' the steps we take, are not so large and swift as his. Hark, how the Blessed Saints and Martyrs call upon us to *remember Eternity, and to lift up our Eyes to him that reigneth in the Heavens.* Let me exhort ye, O Christians, who-soever ye are, to imitate the pious *Symphorianus*; let our Conduct and Behaviour be great as his; let us form our Dispositions and Actions by the happy Model of his bright Example; let us patiently bear the Yoke of Christ, and refuse no Labours or Difficulties whatever upon his Account and for his Sake; let us follow him to
the

the Cross, let us quit our Temporal Interests and Enjoyments, and if occasion be, even Life itself. If this shall happen to be our Case, then is the Time to shew ourselves Men, to exert our Christian Fortitude and Patience, and to let our Cruel Enemies see, that Death with all his train of Terrors is not able to affright us. And when we fall into divers Temptations, when Sorrows and Afflictions are our only Companions, when Infamy, Disgrace and Poverty are our Portion, when like *Job* we sit Mourning upon the Dunghil, and our Calamities, if possible, are greater than his, then let us remember the brave *Symphorianus*, and all the noble Army of Martyrs; let their glorious Examples inspire us with Courage, and let us often repeat this Saying to ourselves, *The Sufferings of this Life are of a short Duration, they are even as nothing*; let us therefore take our leave of the World, adieu ye false and flattering Vanities, farewell for ever: Thou only *Eternity* art welcome to us, welcome, and again, thou art welcome, *Eternity*.

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